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## *The Pages and Rosewell*

BETTY CROWE LEVINER

### *The Page Family.*

In a still relatively undeveloped part of Gloucester County, Virginia, there stands the ruins of what has been called "the finest of all American houses." Begun between 1721 and 1726, Rosewell was the eighteenth-century home of the Page family. A massive three-story brick mansion with two cupolas, the house proclaimed its occupants to be powerful, educated, and wealthy. Yet by the end of the eighteenth century the family had been reduced to such straitened conditions that the then current owner of Rosewell considered the possibility of having to sell the estate.

It seems extraordinary that one family, in less than three generations, could suffer such a financial downfall. Over the course of the eighteenth century, various Pages had intermarried with Carters, Randolphs, and Tayloes. They had been sent to England to study at Eton and Oxford, they had been appointed to the Governor's Council. They had built not only Rosewell, but during the 1760s they constructed a second mansion house, called Mannsfield, in Spotsylvania County, a few miles south of Fredericksburg. On the surface, the Pages appeared to flourish, but various records reveal the beginning of a downward spiral characterized by poor-quality tobacco, crop failures, and credit that had to be extended and re-extended.

An examination of the Pages' economic decline during the eighteenth century, and an attempt to determine possible causes for their financial reverses, is a revealing picture of a certain fragility inherent in the Virginia tobacco economy. This study is not one that has been readily documented due to the surprisingly small quantity of private records that exist for the family.

However, a certain amount of information is available which can be fleshed out to some extent from the diaries, letterbooks, and other primary sources of the Pages' contemporaries. The combined study of the economic history of the Page family with the architectural design of Rosewell may seem to be a blending of disparate topics, but there is certain justification for linking them. Rosewell's construction was a primary factor in the family's economic decline, since the expense of building such a palatial residence, even by eighteenth-century Virginia standards, put a financial strain on the Page estate that it could ill afford. Thus, Rosewell's subsequent deterioration was a visible reflection of the family's dwindling resources.

Mann Page I was born in 1691 to Matthew and Mary Mann Page; he was the first of his family to be born at Rosewell.<sup>1</sup> Of the two girls and two boys born to the couple, Mann was the only one to survive beyond childhood. Mann's grandfather, John Page, had come to Virginia about 1650. Settling in the area of Middle Plantation where the city of Williamsburg was later laid out, he quickly began to amass land and to hold positions within the colonial government.<sup>2</sup> His sons, Francis and Matthew, continued in their father's path by marrying well, obtaining land grants, and assuming the usual governmental responsibilities expected of them as members of the colonial gentry.<sup>3</sup> Matthew did particularly well in such pursuits, serving as a county justice as well as a member of the original Board of Trustees of the College of William and Mary. The heir of his brother Francis, who died only four months after their father's death in 1692, Matthew married Mary Mann, the only daughter of John Mann of Timberneck, Gloucester County. At John Mann's death in 1694/5 Mary inherited two-thirds of his estate, thus combining holdings that stretched from Gloucester County in the east to New Kent County in the west. It was through John Mann's Gloucester estate that the Rosewell tract, consisting of about 3,000 acres, came into the Page family.<sup>4</sup>

In 1703 Matthew Page died, and three years later, in 1706, Mann was sent to school in England, where he studied at Eton. From there he went on to St. John's, Oxford, in 1709.<sup>5</sup> Although it is not known how long Mann Page remained at Oxford, by 10 July 1711, he had returned to Virginia, where he married Judith Wormeley, a daughter of Ralph Wormeley II of Rosegill in neighboring Middlesex County.<sup>6</sup> With this marriage, Page allied himself with another leading colonial Virginia family of which



Judith, like her husband, was a third-generation representative. Also like her husband, she had been left fatherless at an early age. Ralph Wormeley II possessed one of the largest libraries in the colony for his day. He was known as a lavish entertainer, and for having one of the most impressive estates in Virginia during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Influential and enterprising, Wormeley was also president of the Council.<sup>7</sup>

A few personal and official glimpses of Page's life during the period of his first marriage may be found. On 9 March 1713 Governor Alexander Spotswood recommended him to the Lords Commissioners of Trade for appointment to the Council, and described him as "Mr. Mann Page a young gentleman of a liberal education, good parts, and a very plentiful estate, whose father and grandfather both had the honor of the same post." The following year, at the age of 23, he received the appointment despite his lack of "previous service in a vestry, a county court, or the House of Burgesses," although as Robert "King" Carter noted in his letterbook, "Rising [to the Council] Generally goes by favour."<sup>8</sup>

Two years later, two further references to Page of a personal nature can be gleaned from various sources. In a catalogue of his books taken in 1716, Godfrey Pole, a member of the House of Burgesses and clerk of Northampton County, noted that Mann Page had borrowed *Davenant on Resumptions*, evidently a book dealing with public finance, which implies that Page was interested in financial matters relating to government.<sup>9</sup> The other reference to Page occurs in his mother-in-law's will dated 9 November 1716. In this document Judith Wormeley's mother left Page "all my money and effects in the hands of or due me by Messrs. Francis and John Willis, of London, merchants, also 20 hogsheads of my tobacco of this year's crops, also to said Mann Page and my daughter Judith his wife, 8 negroes."<sup>10</sup> A month later Judith Wormeley herself died, apparently of measles, three days after the birth of their third child. Despite his declaration of bereavement on her tombstone,<sup>11</sup> Page quickly remarried. His second wife was Judith Carter, a daughter of Robert "King" Carter of Corotoman, and it is because of this connection that a picture of Page begins to emerge.

First of all, the records begin to reveal the acquisition of large tracts of land in the Northern Neck, a geographic term that Page's new father-in-law defined as loosely as possible. As agent for Lord Fairfax and his proprietorship in the Northern Neck, Robert Carter

amassed huge tracts of land not only for himself but for his entire family. These claims extended beyond the Northern Neck proper into northern Virginia, and from there as far west as the Shenandoah Valley. Despite complaints from settlers in the region, Carter continued to record claim after claim until, at the time of his death in 1732, his holdings amounted to more than 300,000 acres. Mann Page was included in this massive Carter land acquisition, obtaining grants in excess of 20,000 acres in six years. On 28 August 1724, Page received a grant of 10,610 acres in Stafford County, on 12 December 1728, a grant of 3,500 acres in Spotsylvania County, and on 23 September 1730, a grant of 8,007 acres in Stafford County.<sup>12</sup> In addition to these, Page held large tracts in Spotsylvania, Prince William, and other counties. By the time of his death, Mann Page's holdings amounted to more than 70,000 acres scattered over nine counties.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to taking part in Carter's real estate acquisitions, Page also joined with Robert Carter and his sons, Robert and Charles, in the organization of the Frying Pan Company. The purpose of this venture was the mining of copper from the cuprous sandstone formation located on what is now the boundary between Fairfax and Loudon Counties.<sup>14</sup> While a local assayer had been enthusiastic about the amount of copper found in the ore, English assayers were less impressed. Although the business was a commercial failure, it still could be considered successful in that the partners acquired further land holdings in the process.

Secondly, it is during this period of business collaboration that the letterbooks and diaries of "King" Carter offer us further personal glimpses of Mann Page. Through his letters we learn that Page suffered from gout, possibly the cause of his early death, and the same malady that afflicted Carter on occasion. On 28 July 1724 Carter noted in his diary that "Collo [Colonel] Page & his wife came here & 2 days later he had begun to complain . . . with the Gout in one hand." In a letter written three years later, Carter stated that "I am thankfull to you for your news and believe it tired you hartily to write so much your refuge must be to do as I am forced to write by another hand."<sup>15</sup> Throughout the letterbooks and diaries there are sprinkled references to Mann Page's ill health, although whether or not these were all attributed solely to gout is not specified. In 1728, Carter wrote that "Colonel Page's milk agrees so well with him that makes me hope he will prolong his life to gray hairs,"<sup>16</sup> which leads the reader to suspect that Page was often sick.

It is also obvious from the letter books that Carter held Page in high esteem. In June of 1729 Carter described his son-in-law as one "who always appears so strenuously my friend." On another occasion Carter sent "My love and respects to my Daughter & your fireside I should be hugely Glad of ye pleasure of Your compy sometime in ye Christmass hollidays. . . ." In his most lavish praise of his daughter's husband, Carter wrote to Page: "You are blest with so steady a head and so tenacious a memory that I never doubt your punctual performance of all particulars that you are at any time pleased to take into your command."<sup>17</sup> That so successful an individual as Carter should speak so highly of his son-in-law suggests that Page's abilities were valued and respected by others as well; Page in return held Carter in high regard. In his will Page spoke of "my ever honoured father-in-law and dear friend, Robert Carter, Esqr. . . ." Further evidence of Page's official standing within the colony is found in Governor Hugh Drysdale's "present State of Virginia" compiled for the year 1726, in which Drysdale listed Page as a member of the Council as well as a judge of the General Court. Under county particulars, Page was listed as a county lieutenant.<sup>18</sup>

It is during the period of his second marriage that Mann Page began building his mansion. As Edmund Morgan pointed out almost thirty-five years ago, a "building was designed to show off the owner's position in society . . . It announced to the world that he was a gentleman."<sup>19</sup> Given Rosewell's size and elegant detail, it would seem that Mann Page possessed no mean estimate of either himself or his social position. The house itself reveals a close relationship with English domestic architecture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Since Mann Page attended English schools from 1706 to 1711, it is not surprising that his manor reflected the Baroque influence of Sir Christopher Wren, for Wren's style was one that Page knew from first-hand observation. The more fashionable Palladian school espoused by Lord Burlington, Colin Campbell, and William Kent began a steady popularization after 1715 with the publication of Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus*, and Palladian design consequently dominated English architecture for the following forty-five years. However, in his choice of Baroque-influenced architectural design, Page was typical of well-to-do English merchants of the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

Nevertheless, there is a monumental aspect to Rosewell that causes one to wonder if pride of family alone lay behind the

building of such a house. As noted, Page's first wife was the daughter of Ralph Wormeley II, a man whose reputation for lavish living and hospitality survived his death. During the period of Page's first marriage, he probably had contact with Robert Carter, who acted as one of the guardians of Wormeley's two sons. After Judith Wormeley's death, Page's marriage to one of Robert Carter's daughters brought him into close contact with the most powerful individual in Virginia at a time when he is thought to have begun building Corotoman, one of the grandest colonial houses of its period.<sup>20</sup> It is possible that Mann Page was drawn to compete with his father-in-law. The combined holdings of Page's parents had given him the potential for being one of the richest men in the colony.

While influence upon Page by Virginia luminaries such as Carter cannot be determined, it seems likely that a certain amount of acquisitive competitiveness existed within the younger man. As a means of expressing his individuality, building a house such as Rosewell was symbolically effective, particularly since the huge dwelling also served to demonstrate his academic exposure to English architecture and it served as visible evidence of his material resources.<sup>21</sup>

Rosewell was located on the tract of the same name in Gloucester County. The house and grounds were on a prominence overlooking Carter's Creek to the east and the York River to the south. Although its design source and architect remain in dispute, it clearly fulfilled its reputation of being "a mansion of such grandeur that it rivaled the palace of the Royal Governor in Williamsburg . . ." even in its own time.<sup>22</sup> The house was the largest private dwelling of its time in colonial Virginia, having three full stories above an "English" or above-grade basement; it boasted not one but two cupolas as well as end pavilions.<sup>23</sup> It appears to have been richly decorated with paneling of various woods and marble mantels throughout, in addition to having two impressive staircases. With such sumptuousness, it indeed would seem that Mann Page was in competition with the Royal Governor across the river in Williamsburg.

Unfortunately, Page's architectural ambitiousness may have been part of his family's eventual financial straits, for it is believed that he overstepped his means in building such a house. Rosewell's construction left him in debt, and his son, who had to finish the building, inherited this financial burden. Even Page's grandson was strapped with a large house surrounded by worn-out lands

that were no longer producing the quantity or quality of tobacco they once had.<sup>24</sup>

Mann Page died on Saturday, 24 January 1730/31. It is ironic that his death provided the only known personal glimpse of the man. Before daylight on the day of Page's death, John Clayton of Williamsburg received a letter from Dr. George Nicholas, who was attending the patient at Rosewell. Nicholas informed Clayton that Page was dying and wanted to draw up his will; Clayton was asked to come to Rosewell for that purpose. Arriving at the Page home about 9:30 that morning, Clayton went almost immediately to the dying man's bedchamber. Page ordered everyone else out of the room except for a young mulatto boy whom he used to call other people into the room as he needed them. During the process of dictating his lengthy will, Page reportedly halted dictation when anyone such as his wife, the doctor, or servants, entered the chamber. Clayton worked on the draft of the will until seven o'clock in the evening, and then spent an additional hour writing a codicil regarding property which Page had neglected to mention in the will. Clayton described Page as being sound of mind, but troubled that he would not live to see the document finished. He continually pressed Clayton to hurry. The will itself is mostly in Page's own words, since he did not wish Clayton to take the time to transpose his bequests into proper legal form. Page died at nine o'clock that night, only an hour after finishing the will and codicil.<sup>25</sup>

The will is clear both in its distribution of Page's property and in its intentions. Page left his wife a life interest in the buildings at Rosewell as well as the land, stock, and slaves connected with it. In addition, she was to receive one-third of her husband's personal estate and one-seventh of his interest in the Frying Pan Company. Ralph Page, as the eldest male child, was to inherit everything in which Judith Carter Page had been given a life estate, as well as all his father's properties, including slaves and livestock, on the lands located in Gloucester, Hanover, and King William Counties. Ralph was also left the slaves and land from the estate of his mother, Judith Wormeley Page. Mann Page II (Fig. 1) received the lands and slaves held in Judith Carter Page's right which were a bequest from her father.<sup>26</sup>

In 1731 Ralph Page died in England of smallpox; he never married.<sup>27</sup> As the next in line, Mann II inherited the estate. Over the course of the following fifteen years, he was to be faced with the necessity of raising as much as £7,000 sterling to pay all the





*Figure 1. Mann Page II by Charles Bridges, c. 1745. Oil on canvas, dimensions not recorded. Collection of the College of William and Mary, accession 1897.010.*

bequests left to the other children of Mann Page, who were left sums collectible when they reached their majority. Between 1735 and 1743, this ultimately amounted to £4,500 sterling that was to be paid out to four surviving heirs.<sup>28</sup>

Although unfinished at the time of his death, Rosewell was complete enough for Mann Page I to lie in state in its great hall prior to burial in the family cemetery just east of the mansion.<sup>29</sup> Under the provisions of her husband's will, Judith Carter Page



*Figure 2. Alice Grymes Page and Her Son John by Charles Bridges, c. 1745. Oil on canvas, dimensions not recorded. Collection of the College of William and Mary, acc. 1897.011.*

remained as the principal resident of Rosewell, but Mann Page II is credited with completing the mansion. This must have been a difficult task, since his father's debts exceeded the value of his slaves and personal property.<sup>30</sup> In 1732, an act was passed which enabled Robert Carter, one of the executors of the estate, to pay off the debts of Mann Page I and thereby protect "the orphans of his deceased Son in Law in order to preserve their Estates from being pulled to pieces by their Father's creditors."<sup>31</sup> However,

this did not end the burden of his father's debts on Mann Page II. Twelve years later, he petitioned the House of Burgesses for permission to break the entail on the Page estate so that funds could be raised through land sales in order to pay his father's debts as well as the portions of the estate due to his younger brothers and sisters. An act of assembly was passed in September 1744 docking the entail and authorizing the sale of certain lands for these purposes.<sup>32</sup> Some historians have construed this to be an action on Page's part to obtain money needed to finish the house. Others, however, interpret this sale of land as an effort to repay credit extended to Page prior to his marriage in the early 1740s, and that Page had used this credit to complete the house. Both theories have validity since it appears that the house was not finished before 1737. This possible completion date can be determined through a provision of Robert Carter's will (the first of several) of 11 October 1726 which stipulated that Carter's sons were to pay their sister Judith £100 each upon the completion of Mann Page's mansion house. Records indicate that this directive had not been carried out as of 28 June 1737.<sup>33</sup>

The state of Mann Page I's affairs must have come as a surprise to his family. Since Robert Carter obviously admired his son-in-law's abilities, and valued his advice and judgment, it must have been a bitter pill for him to swallow when he was forced to admit that "Colo Pages Books. . . appear to be kept in a very Confused negligent manner. . . ."<sup>34</sup> The extent and consequent results of this disorder is reflected clearly in the difficulties encountered by Page's namesake.

Aside from these difficulties, however, the second Mann Page seems to have led a fairly uneventful life at Rosewell, where he was born in 1718. A 1740 graduate of William and Mary, and later a member of its Board of Visitors,<sup>35</sup> he married Alice Grymes (Fig. 2) of Brandon on 31 December 1741.<sup>36</sup> In 1745 he was listed as clerk of court for Gloucester County.<sup>37</sup> After Alice's death on 11 January 1746/47, he married Ann Corbin Tayloe of Mt. Airy in 1748.<sup>38</sup> There were five children by each wife; eight of the ten reached maturity. Scattered references to land transactions by the younger Page have been found, but otherwise there is even less documentary information regarding the son than for the father. Also, Mann Page II played only a small part in politics, even to the point of declining to serve on the colonial Council. He apparently felt that his younger brother John, who had studied law, was better qualified to fill that role. Mann II was content to concern himself with an interest in local affairs.<sup>39</sup>



Approximately ten years after Page married Ann Corbin Tayloe, his wife's brother, John Tayloe of Mt. Airy, began work on the Palladian mansion that still stands today in Richmond County. Sometime in the 1760s Page started construction of his own new manor, Mannsfield, in Spotsylvania County.<sup>40</sup> This building, it would appear, was a relatively unimaginative adaptation of the Tayloe house. In a time when the gentry still preferred brick for construction, both Tayloe and Page employed stone. Both Mt. Airy and Mannsfield were double-pile structures with similar floor plans and flanking dependencies connected by quadrant passages to the main house. Although the house burned during the Civil War, we do have one eighteenth century description and evaluation of it. Benjamin Henry Latrobe wrote on 19 July 1796: "I dined. . . at Mr. Man Page's [Mann Page III] at Mansfield where I met several Gentlemen of the town and neighborhood. Mr. Page's house is built of Stone of a good but coarse grit in the style of the Country Gentlemen's houses in England of 50 Years ago. It is a tolerably good house but the taste is indifferent."<sup>41</sup>

Latrobe's description appears to indicate that he considered the house twenty years out of date even at the time it was built. Within the Virginia architectural idiom of the 1760s, however, Page would have thought just the opposite. Although Mannsfield may have been conservative, it was very much a contrast with the old-fashioned nature of Rosewell, and no doubt represented to Page an opportunity to demonstrate his family's continued ability to remain at the forefront of Virginia's elite, both culturally and materially.

There was also another possible motivation for the construction of Mannsfield. Page's eldest son John (Fig. 3) married Frances Burwell about 1765.<sup>42</sup> By leaving Rosewell, Page enabled his son to establish himself and his wife at an impressive, if stylistically out-of-date, family seat. However, the new mansion also permitted the elder son of his second marriage, Mann Page III, to inherit an impressive dwelling as well. Unfortunately, this legacy also saddled both sons with mansions that were expensive to maintain as well as divided the family's lands, thereby reducing the total revenue available to each son. It should be pointed out that the same sort of division was made under the terms of the first Mann Page's will. This tactic would have allowed the elder Page's only living son by his first wife, Ralph Page, to inherit the Rosewell estate, leaving the eldest son of his second marriage, Mann II, the lands in Spotsylvania County. Only Ralph's early death



*Figure 3. John Page by John Wollaston, c. 1758. Oil on canvas, dimensions not recorded. Collection of the College of William and Mary, acc. 1897.004.*

forestalled this property division. If he had lived, Ralph would have experienced greater difficulty in fulfilling the terms of his father's will than did his brother, since he would have received a smaller inheritance.

On 7 November 1780 Mann Page II wrote his will in his own hand. Even though it was not witnessed, the county court was satisfied that the document was legitimate, and ordered that it be recorded. Like his father, the younger Page was careful to see that his wife and children were each provided for in regard to property, but in terms of actual money, his bequests were much

more circumspect. He left his wife £200 per year, £570 to the estate of his deceased daughter's husband, Lewis Burwell, to be divided between his two granddaughters, and £200 to a free school.<sup>43</sup> This £970 initial outlay, even with the £200 annual stipend for Page's widow, seems miniscule when compared with the £7,000 stipulated in his father's will. It is possible that Mann Page II did not want to inflict on his family the same financial hardships that he had experienced due to an overly-generous father.

It is apparent in a letter of 27 May 1769 to John Norton, a London merchant, that even before his father's death, John Page quickly became acquainted with the expenses of maintaining a large house. In the letter he lamented that "the Great Scarcity of Money here, the Shortness of my Crops for four Years past, & the necessary Expenses of an encreasing Family joined to the Commencement of Housekeeping in large House, have forced me to submit to it [debt] for a while. . . ."<sup>44</sup> Other letters to the same merchant indicate that Page was in almost constant submission to debt, since that subject was a continual refrain in his correspondence, which was filled with apologies for failure to repay advances. Other sources reveal that financial embarrassment plagued Page until the end of his life and the causes seem to have remained much the same as those which he outlined in the 1769 letter to Norton.

Given John Page's assertions that he practiced "the most strict Economy,"<sup>45</sup> it is interesting to consider evidence presented by artifacts discovered in a trash pit near the mansion. It is believed the pit was filled between 1770 and 1772,<sup>46</sup> and therefore it provides some insight to housekeeping practices at Rosewell shortly after John Page became master there. The artifacts recovered include the usual broken pottery and glass, shells and bones from the kitchen, along with small, miscellaneous household items. It is significant that some of the items found were still in serviceable condition, while others certainly possessed monetary value. For example, a miniature padlock and key and a harness buckle were found in the pit, as well as a brass weight, brass buttons, and silvered brass harness. Although the Pages may have had no further use for such objects, they could have been bartered or sold. Even more remarkable was the discovery of silver in the course of the dig, including a Louis XV half-ecu piece and one pair of a set of sleeve buttons.<sup>47</sup> The discovery of one or two of these items would not be surprising since objects are often

accidentally discarded. In this instance, it is surprising that so many reuseable items were thrown out. This would seem to indicate slack management of the household during a time of increasing financial distress.

Compounding his problems with money, John Page may not have received needed support from his father. There is a hint of this in correspondence to Norton of 31 July 1771, when Page indicated that his father had not answered a request for the “rest of his Quarters [land] in Gloster.”<sup>48</sup> In a letter of 11 October he stated that he would again ask for the Gloucester lands, and that he would “also call on Col. Burwell [Page’s father-in-law] for Assistance,” but that he “despair[ed] of getting any Thing.”<sup>49</sup> In a letter dated almost twenty years later, Page complained of his father having sold land in Essex County that had been “twice” entailed on him. There is a slight suggestion of indignation on John’s part due to the fact that he was not appointed the executor of his father’s estate. The same letter also reveals that John Page was being hounded to pay off his father’s debts. Page firmly informed his correspondent that he did not consider himself answerable for any part of these debts since he was only one of the heirs of the estate rather than the executor. Despite this disclaimer of responsibility, Page admitted that “The H.Ct. of Chancery is to determine whether I am to pay & what Proportion of my Fathers Debts.”<sup>50</sup>

Indications of Page’s own continuing shortage of funds occur in another letter of 12 March 1795, evidently written to Robert Carter of Nomini Hall and Baltimore. Page asked for a loan of \$100 since a trip had lasted longer than he expected, leaving him stranded away from home with no money. This was followed by another letter dated 2 May of the same year, in which Page apologized for not being able to repay the \$100 loan by the time promised.<sup>51</sup>

Although more politically-minded than any of his forebears, John Page discovered that this, too, could be an expensive business. In a letter written prior to the Revolution, he complained of “the ridiculous Extravagance of Burgess making.”<sup>52</sup> Nor did things improve for him during the Revolution when he patriotically purchased large amounts of Virginia treasury notes only to have the state repudiate them after the British surrender.<sup>53</sup> So much of Page’s energy was spent serving in government — either as a burgess, a member of the Governor’s Council, lieutenant governor, congressman, or governor at different periods in his

life — that he was prevented from giving his personal affairs sufficient attention. This in turn affected his ability to attract the votes needed to obtain a salaried public office after the Revolution. Voters evidently felt that someone who could not manage his own affairs was not capable of managing those of the state.<sup>54</sup>

During the time of John Page's tenure at Rosewell, his continuing struggle to make ends meet naturally affected his ability to maintain the estate. In October, 1771, Page wrote that his "House is very much out of Repair," and that he had "engaged a Man to put it in a saving Condition next Spring." To this end, he placed an order with London merchant John Norton & Sons for various paints and nails, oil, and lamp black.<sup>55</sup> Page's financial condition remained strained, and politics kept him away from home for longer periods of time, first as Congressman from 1789 to 1797, and then as governor of Virginia from 1802 to 1805. It is reasonable to assume that Rosewell was allowed to deteriorate further during these absences.<sup>56</sup> Evidence supporting this may be found in insurance policies taken out on the house and its dependencies in 1802, 1806, and 1815. Between 1802 and 1806 the valuation of the property dropped \$200 from \$9,900 to \$9,700. From 1806 to 1815, which includes the seven years following Page's death when the house was uninhabited, the value of the property was placed at only \$8,800, and the policy noted that the house and chimneys were "in bad repair."<sup>57</sup> Thus, under the tenure of its last eighteenth-century master, Rosewell began its slow decline, revealing little of its former premier status among the dwellings of colonial Virginia.

The phenomenon of such a major American building reaching a state of disrepair less than one hundred years after it was built, as we have seen, was a matter of cumulative financial woes spread over three generations of the Page family. Mann Page I began this downward spiral by overextending himself. The house itself was certainly a factor in this, for even a rough estimate of Rosewell's cost, based upon London construction figures of the 1730s, suggests a figure of approximately £11,000. Added to the complex debt embedded in the estate of Mann Page I was the large cash bequest to his children. Rather than managing to overcome family debt, Mann Page augmented these financial problems, first with the construction of his own new mansion, and then with the division of his estate, which decreased the total economic resources available to his heirs. Of these, John Page seems to have been lax in the management of his share of the



estate, as even archaeological evidence suggests.

The final reasons for the decline of the Page family fortunes were economic ones. Both Mann Page I and Mann Page II had shown poor judgment in the times they selected to embark upon mansion-building. Tobacco prices dropped in the mid-1720s about the time that Rosewell was started and then again in the 1760s when the construction of Mannsfield was undertaken. Other circumstances added to the problem of falling tobacco prices. Land was worn out from continuous tobacco cultivation, and war from 1776 to 1783 brought about a devastating period of inflation. Changing economic and trading conditions during the 1780s caused the planters who were caught in the rut of colonial-era financial and agricultural practices to face the possibility of economic extinction.<sup>58</sup>

Of the Pages' financial problems, no single dilemma was necessarily ruinous, but when combined, the complex burdens overtaxed the family's resources which were mostly based on large, underdeveloped landholdings during the first half of the eighteenth century. The repeated division of the family lands further contributed to the situation, since eleven children reached maturity as the eighteenth century ended and the nineteenth began.<sup>59</sup>

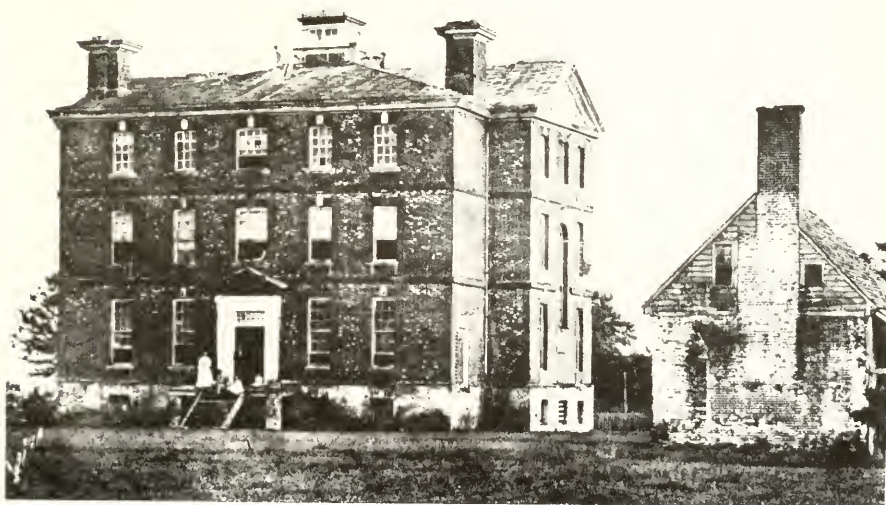


*Figure 4. Conjectural reconstruction of Rosewell by Thomas T. Waterman, from A. Lawrence Kocher and Howard Dearstyne, Shadows in Silver; a Record of Virginia, 1850-1900 (New York: Scribner's, 1954), plate 4.*

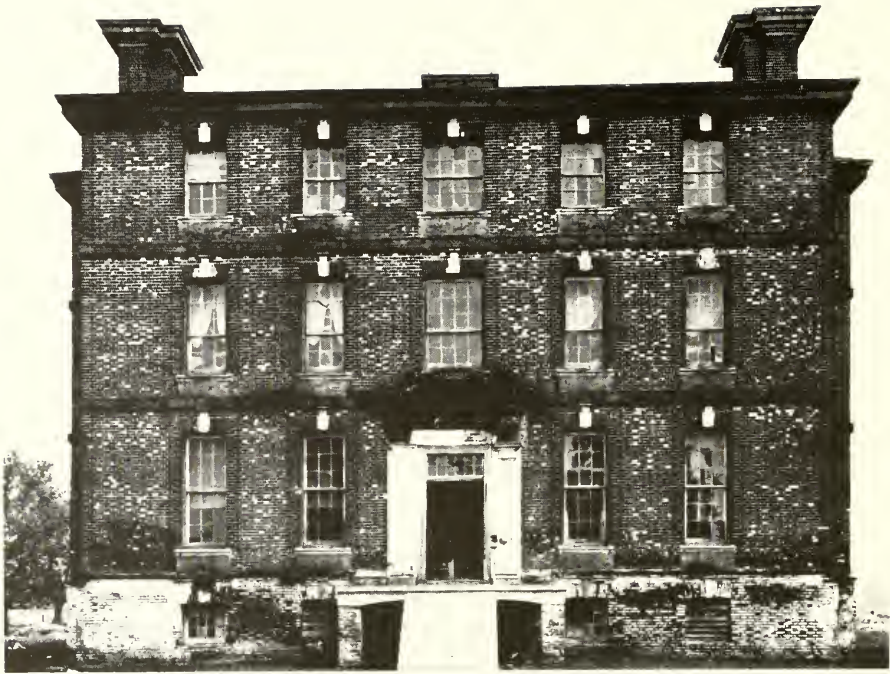
*Rosewell.*

On 12 March 1721, Colonel William Byrd II recorded in his diary that Colonel Page's house had burned. Sometime between that date and 1726, Mann Page set about building what Thomas Waterman has called "the finest of all American houses."<sup>60</sup>

Situated on a north/south axis on the west side of Carter's Creek and north of the York River, Rosewell (Fig. 4) consisted of an almost square three-story five-bay main block of brick laid in Flemish bond with projecting pavilions on the east and west sides. The pavilions, flanked on either side by interior end chimneys capped with Portland stone, contained the major stairway on the east and the minor on the west. Each stairway was lit on the first-floor landing by a large arched or compass-head window containing a sash finished with segmental lights or segmental tracery of the muntins at the top (Fig. 7). A fluted keystone flanked by carved scrolls divides the rubbed and gauged brick of the arch itself. Belt courses delineated the second and third floor levels; a molded watertable set off the top of the full basement. While the south side of the house (Fig. 6) fronted the river, it would appear that the north door (Fig. 5) was considered the main entrance by virtue of the finer architectural treatment of the north door surround and the unusual off-center entrance



*Figure 5. Rosewell from the northwest, from Kocher and Dearstyne, plate 5.*



*Figure 6. Rosewell from the south, from Thomas Tilaston Waterman, The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776, p. 113. Copyright 1944 by the University of North Carolina Press. This and following views from Waterman are reprinted with the permission of the publisher.*

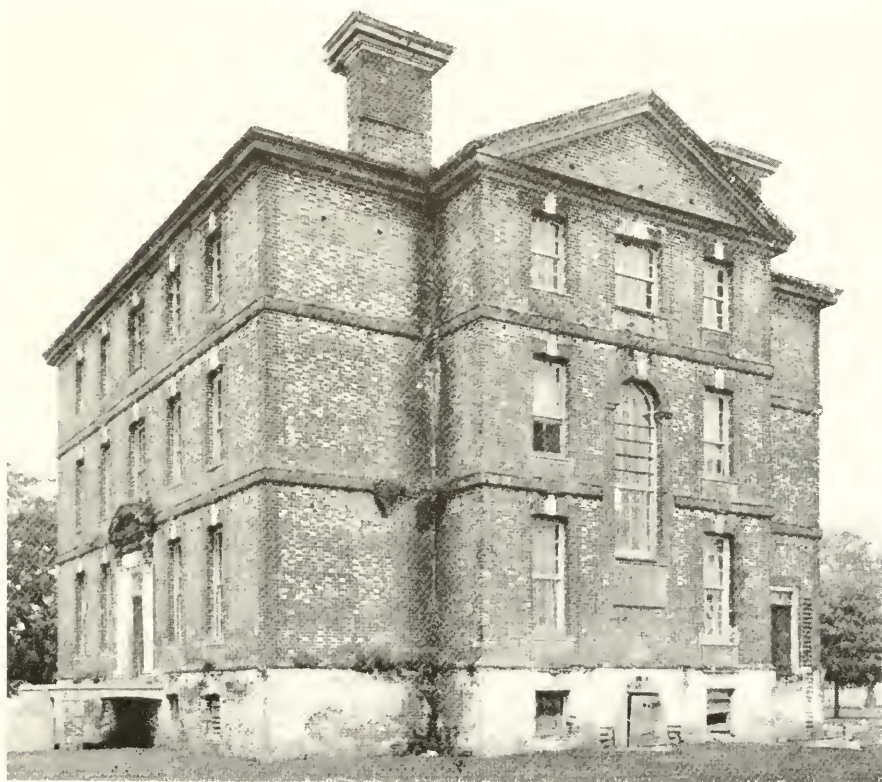
hall with its fine paneling and staircase.<sup>61</sup> The principal doorway was surmounted on a pitched pediment supported by consoles and narrow, paneled pilasters; the south door was flanked by fluted pilasters and topped by a segmentally arched pediment. Above the third-floor cornice ran a brick parapet, capped with a Portland stone parapet; fragments of the capstones remained as bonded elements of the chimney faces (Fig. 7) after the nineteenth century alteration of Rosewell.

The overall visual effect of the house was one of verticality, offset by the horizontal effects of the belt courses, the broader windows in the center bay of each facade, as well as the diminishing height of the windows from the first floor to the third. Emphasizing the verticality was the lateral effect of the chimney's Portland-stone cornices, and most importantly, the flattened roof configuration. Rosewell's original roof form can only be suggested, since it was altered in 1838. However, considering the prevailing



styles of the group of houses from which Rosewell seems to have been derived, the most logical treatment is that of a shallow deck-on-hip. This hypothesis is reinforced by the shadows of the roof line that can still be seen on the chimneys today. At either end of the roof was a cupola, a highly unusual element in a private building of colonial Virginia, and the existence of two is unique in eighteenth-century America.<sup>62</sup> The west cupola provided light for the upper portion of a stair that extended all the way from the basement to the roof, unlike the east stair that connected only the first and second floors. The east cupola provided balance and symmetry.

While the exterior was fairly restrained in its ornamentation, the interior was richly decorated, although the extent of the ornament is conjectural. Various sources indicate the extensive use of floor-to-ceiling paneling, marble mantels, marble flooring



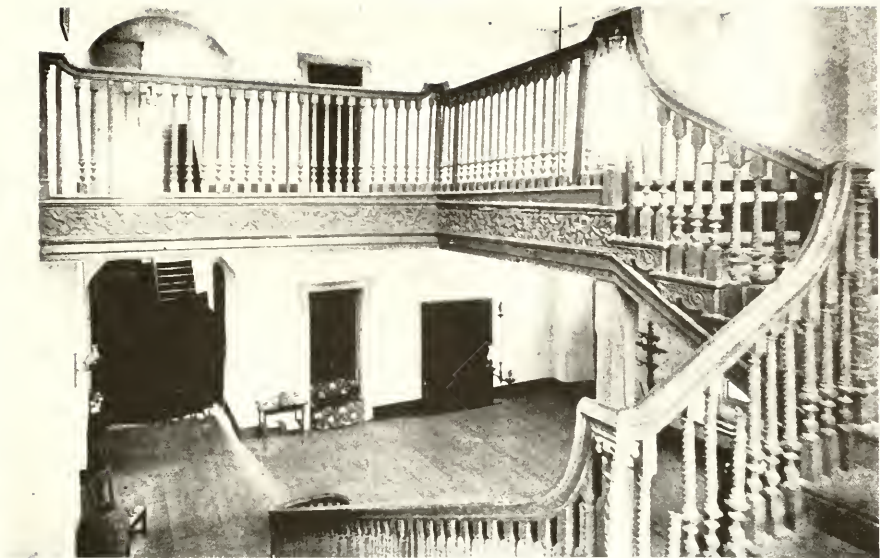
*Figure 7. Rosewell from the southeast, from Waterman.*

in the great hall, and extensive relief and applique carving.<sup>63</sup> The plan of the house (see Fig. 11) is considered to be unusual in that it contains an off-center entrance hall rather than the traditional floor plan in eighteenth-century Virginia of hall-passage-parlor. The entry hall was dominated by what “was undoubtedly the finest [staircase] in America, being wide enough for eight persons to ascend abreast.” The stairway (Fig. 9) boasted “three turned and spiraled balusters to a step supporting a richly moulded handrail and resting on superb carved brackets,” which were in the form of scrolled consoles with acanthus leaves. At its base, the stair turned back upon itself (Fig. 10) to a depth of the second step and the carved newel was exceptionally large.<sup>64</sup>

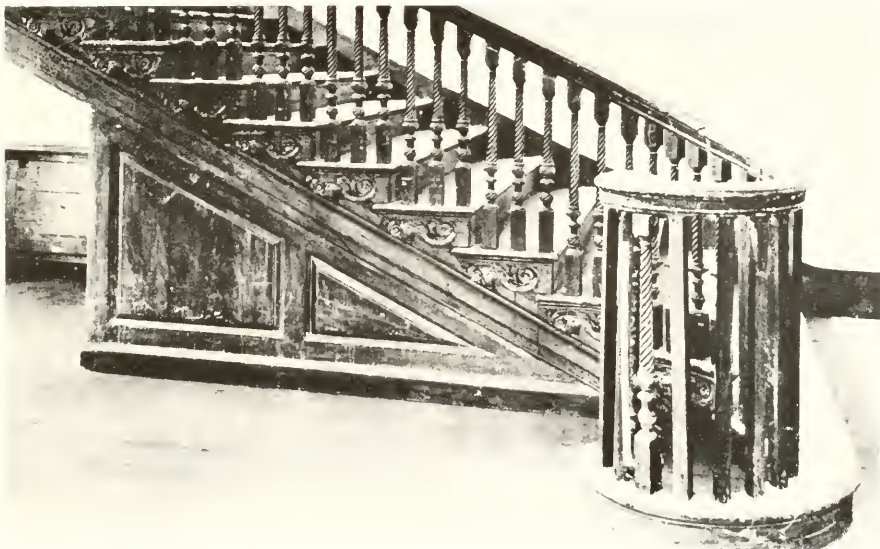
The original utilization of the rooms on the first floor is difficult to determine. It is possible that the hall with its marble floor and better ventilation was used as a dining room in summer and on special occasions, and the adjacent northwest room possibly serving as the dining room during the winter.<sup>65</sup> There is the strong possibility that one of the two south rooms was a first-floor



*Figure 8. View of Rosewell's major stairway and great hall, from the Cook Collection, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.*



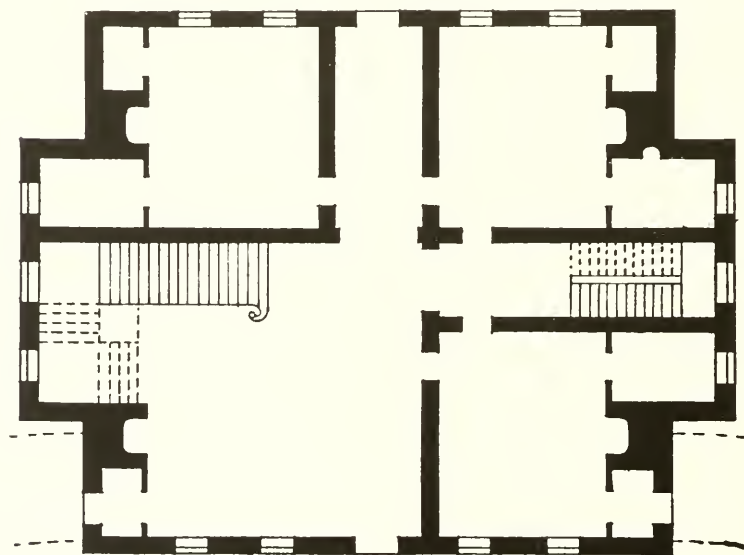
*Figure 9. View of the first floor landing of the major stairway of Rosewell, from Lewis A. Coffin, Jr., and Arthur C. Holden, Brick Architecture of the Colonial Period in Maryland and Virginia (New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1919), plate 99.*



*Figure 10. Detail of the major stair at Rosewell, from Waterman.*

bedchamber. Bedchambers on the ground floor were the rule rather than the exception during the eighteenth century in Virginia. There is also the statement from John Page that Mann Page II's library was contained in his closet, and the southwest room, if it were a bedchamber, had a closet with a fireplace which would have provided warmth and dryness in the winter.<sup>66</sup>

Further evidence for the placement of a dining room and first-floor chamber on the west side of the house is the location of the minor stair between them. The back stairs descended to the basement where beverages of various sorts could have been stored, as well as providing access to the upper floors for family members and servants. This arrangement would have allowed the remaining southeast room to be used as a parlour, with the hall taking over this function as well during the summer. However, these conclusions are conjectural, for relatively little is known about the interior of Rosewell. The paneling and other room detailing that might have given the twentieth-century student some idea of room hierarchy was lost under Thomas Booth's tenure as owner of Rosewell.



*Figure 11. First floor plan, Rosewell, from Waterman, p. 109. The top of the plan represents the south side of the house.*



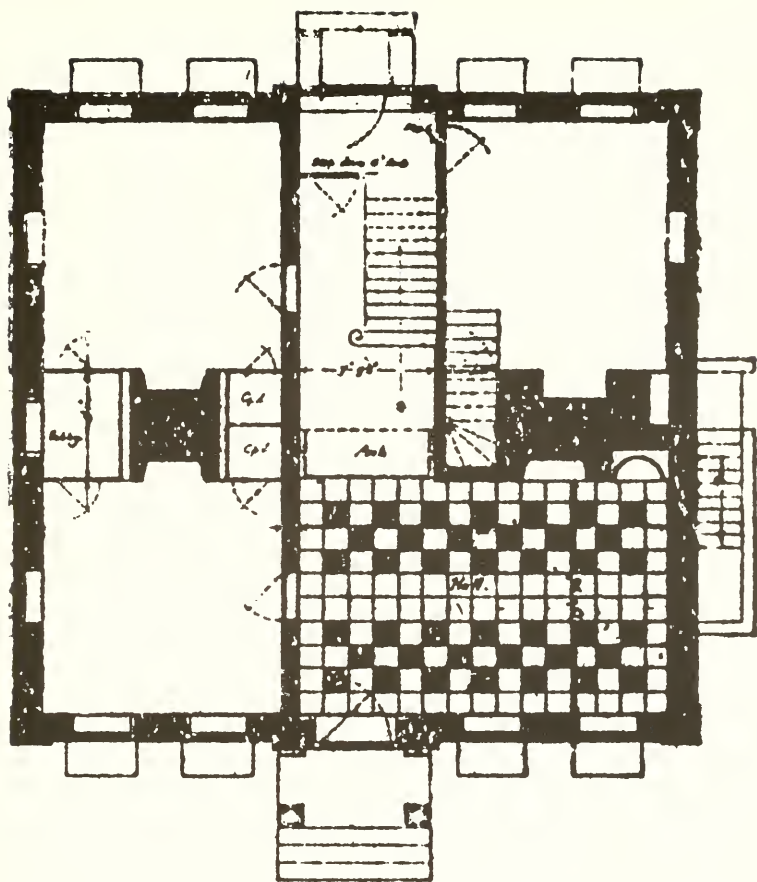


Figure 12. Floor plan, Rainham Hall, from Margaret Jourdain, *English Interiors in Small Houses, from the Restoration to the Regency, 1660-1728* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., reissued 1933), p.23.

The building's exterior "Englishness" may have extended to the interior as well. However, in comparing Rosewell's floor plan with that of Rainham Hall in Essex, England (Fig. 12), one is struck immediately with the difference in the flow pattern between the two. Rosewell's plan seems somewhat disconnected compared to Rainham's. The intersecting passages at Rosewell may have been Page's attempt to convert an English plan to serve Virginia needs. As architectural historian Dell Upton notes in his article "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth Century Virginia," it is not satisfying to "see Virginia's smaller houses simply as mimetic of England's larger ones. But to describe the

relationship adequately it is necessary to see Virginia houses in their own terms: as solutions that local builders formulated to solve planning problems of their own.” At Rosewell, a large entrance hall provided an impressive welcome to visitors, while the passages allowed the family and guests to retreat to private spaces away from the more formal or public entrance space.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, the passages seem a rather clumsy solution to the growing demand for privacy, and later Virginia houses found more successful alternatives. This may be the one reason why Rosewell’s plan was not emulated in other Virginia dwellings.

Since the major stair ascended only to the second floor, access to the top story was restricted to the minor stairway which ascended to the west cupola, thereby providing access to the roof.<sup>68</sup> Directly above the entrance hall was a gallery which was the same size as the hall. Hung with family portraits,<sup>69</sup> it probably served as a buffer between the public space directly beneath it and the bedchambers on the second floor.

In the attempt to analyze the plan of Rosewell and compare it with other contemporary examples of colonial architecture, one is struck with an incongruity noted by Waterman: “Rosewell might be called the climax of Georgian architecture in the colonies if it were not for the fact that it antedates most of the other great houses of the style and is contemporary with those that it does not antedate.” This statement implies that Rosewell was an architectural prodigy in Virginia. With the exception of the Governor’s Palace, there really was no precedent for Rosewell in Virginia, but similarities with other houses of the period can be noted. The mansion shared with the entrance facades of the Governor’s Palace and the advance buildings of Shirley a center-bay window one light wider than those of the flanking bays.<sup>70</sup> At Christ Church in Lancaster County the transept doors (Fig. 18) boast pitched pediments; the nave entry (Fig. 18a) has a segmental pediment. Both are very similar to those at Rosewell. The off-center entrance hall with stair at Shirley also provides a clear parallel with Rosewell, although the plan of Shirley lacks Rosewell’s passages.

Several architectural comparisons of Rosewell’s plans and elevations with those of other buildings have been made. Thomas Waterman notes the resemblance between Rosewell and Cound Hall in Shropshire, a Baroque country house built early in the first quarter of the eighteenth century and whose designs were signed by John Prince. Waterman points out the similarities to

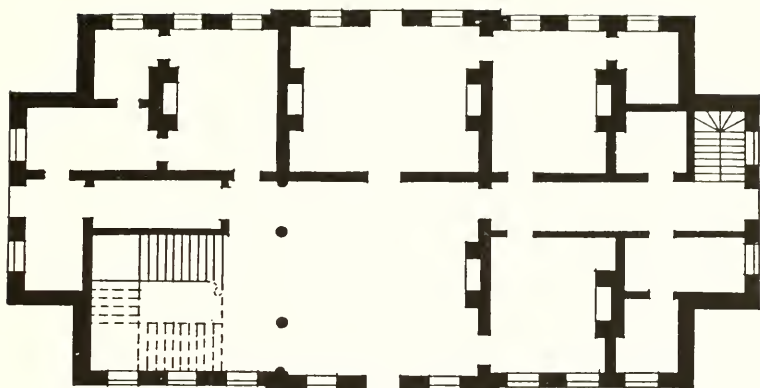


Figure 13. Floor plan, Cound Hall, from *Waterman*, p.108.

Rosewell in the floor plan of Cound (Fig. 13), which has an off-center entrance hall, end pavilions, and comparable fenestration, doorway treatment, and height. There is no record of Prince having emigrated to Virginia, but an intriguing coincidence may be found in the records of King George County, which contain the probate inventory of a John Prince. This man, who was described as a clerk, was deceased by 1727; his estate had a total value of £104:10:10 1/2. Two slaves comprised £50 of this sum, and the second most valuable entry was for "a parsell Old books" listed at £25. Waterman notes that a John Prince was a subscriber to James Gibbs' *Book of Architecture*, which was published in 1725.<sup>71</sup> While at Oxford, Mann Page was less than one hundred miles from Cound. Of further interest is the possibility that Page may have had kinsmen in Cheshire, the county which borders Shropshire on the north. Waterman records having seen "an emblazoned list of mayors in St. John's Church, Chester" which included the name of John Page as an early seventeenth-century incumbent. This man had the same coat-of-arms as the Virginia Pages.<sup>72</sup> Waterman also suggests a Richard Taliaferro as another possibility for Rosewell's architect. It has been pointed out, however, that if Taliaferro was responsible for Rosewell "his precociousness would have outshone that of Thomas Jefferson" since he would have been only in his late teens at the time plans for the house were needed.<sup>73</sup>

Colin Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* has been proposed by Marcus Whiffen as a published source that may have influenced the design of Rosewell. Among the houses featured in Campbell's book are Easton Neston, Rochampton House, and Buckingham

House, all of which show some similarities to Rosewell.<sup>74</sup> As one student of architectural history has suggested, "If one were to take the large, off-centered hall and staircase of Buckingham House, combine it with the large, off-centered hall and transverse passages of Easton Neston, and then add the use of projecting pavilions combined with placement of the two staircases in these pavilions in Roehampton House, there are obvious similarities."<sup>75</sup> However, this seems to be an excessively ingenious explanation for Rosewell's floor plan, which was fairly simple, even if unusual for its time and place.

Lanciano's *Rosewell, Garland of Virginia*, presents two new possibilities as architects of the Page mansion. The first is John Tyler, who constructed Williamsburg's powder magazine, the transepts at Bruton Parish, and completed the Governor's Palace. Lanciano's second candidate, Daniel Wilkerson, is less plausible; he was the long-time overseer at Rosewell. In justifying this conjecture, Lanciano states that since "construction was a major activity on the plantation during his service, [Wilkerson] may have played a role in the design or erection of the mansion."<sup>76</sup> However, since little else is known of Wilkerson, this possibility remains highly conjectural.

In the attempt to assign Rosewell to a particular architectural style there is further diversity of opinion. Lanciano favors Burlington and the Palladians,<sup>77</sup> although this thesis is easily refuted if one compares Palladian architectural form with the plans, elevations, and detailing of Rosewell. For example, Chiswick, Lord Burlington's villa for summer entertainment outside London, exhibits a horizontal orientation, emphasis on the *piano nobile* or reception area of the main floor, subordination of the interior stairs, and a symmetrical floor plan. None of these features were evident at Rosewell, which instead was characterized by its soaring height, almost equal emphasis of the first and second stories, and stair-dominated, off-center entrance hall. Despite its exterior symmetry and what could be called a "Dutch Palladian" interior, Rosewell was obviously not Palladian in the eighteenth century English sense of the term. Whiffen's attempt to find Rosewell's prototypes in *Vitruvius Britannicus* is more tenable. However, the extensive cross-compilation needed for a composite floor plan that resembles Rosewell's seems belabored. Also, there is the obvious difference in scale between the grand houses illustrated in Campbell's work and that of Rosewell.



Waterman seems to be closer to the actual scale of Virginia building when he notes the similarities between Rosewell, other colonial Virginia mansions, and dwellings falling within the Shropshire school of architecture. He cites parallels in floor plans, chimney locations, and room design as well as paneling, stairways, doorways, and the use of brick. However, Waterman ultimately reveals the normal tendency to seek out large-scale English country houses as prototypes for Rosewell. In order to find houses which actually parallel Rosewell's features, one must begin with the revolution in English building implemented by Inigo Jones, John Webb, and Roger Pratt in the first half of the seventeenth century. These three men brought an awareness of classical architecture to England, providing examples of the new style. The Banqueting House, Whitehall, as well as Ashdown House and Coleshill,<sup>78</sup> both in Berkshire, are only three illustrations of this break with the past. Each of these three houses represent architectural styles that dominated Great Britain and Virginia until the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

The impact of the designs of Sir Christopher Wren is another element that must be taken into account. After the Stuart restoration, Wren's appointment as assistant to the Surveyor of the Office of Works and his subsequent attainment of the Surveyorship itself in 1669 assured Wren's domination of English architecture for the rest of the century. Buildings such as St. Paul's, Chelsea Hospital, and Marlborough House provide evidence of the tradition that he instituted even if it is difficult to identify this body of architecture as the "school of Wren." Also present in the late seventeenth century was the English Baroque school that went beyond Wren. However, this style was never completely accepted in Great Britain despite such awesome examples as Blenheim, Castle Howard, and Chatsworth. In fact, some surveys of English architecture even refuse to acknowledge the existence of the Baroque school.<sup>79</sup>

Yet another element to be considered is the Fire of London in 1666. As a result of this catastrophic conflagration, city officials became aware of the need for greater building regulation in regard to fire prevention. The resulting ordinances in turn influenced architectural styles such as window treatments, cornices, building heights, and materials.<sup>80</sup> While these restrictions had little effect on the design of great country manors, they had a significant impact upon urban housing.

All of these elements affected styles of architecture among England's middle class, which wished to be architecturally fashionable but was limited in financial resources. Members of this class could hardly afford to imitate even a relatively modest country house such as Belton. More manageable, however, was the cost of a Wren-influenced townhouse made more fashionable by the addition of a parapet roof and sash windows with recessed frames, but not always demonstrating Wren's degree of insistence upon verticality. As Tipping notes, for the moderately well-to-do, "the five window front of three storeys was the most frequently adopted model, and with every possible variety of material and detail within the limits of the accepted architectural style, it became the exemplar for the new houses of the principal inhabitants of English villages." It is apparent that Mann Page utilized this form of elevation after the 1721 fire destroyed his house.<sup>81</sup>

Mann Page was in England for roughly three to four years, beginning in 1706. The years 1707 and 1709 saw the enactment of two statutes that affected the appearance of London housing. The 1707 statute "abolished the prominent wooden eaves-cornices which were such a striking feature of the streets and squares of the Restoration" and so "the roof was half-hidden by a parapet wall with a cornice of brick. . . a few feet below the summit." The 1709 act called for window frames "to be set back 4 inches, leaving a naked 'reveal' of brickwork."<sup>82</sup> Rosewell exhibited both of these characteristics.

Beyond these two specific features, Rosewell displays other general characteristics of the architectural vernacular of London and its environs during the 1710-1730 period.<sup>83</sup> The mansion's proportional dimensions which were composed of five bays in width by three bays in height (Fig. 4) is the most obvious adaptation of the London norm. Other elements shared by Rosewell and its English counterparts are stair windows with arched heads, off-center, marble-paved entrance halls, window heights which diminished from the first to the third floors, window aprons and keystones, cupolas, lead roofing, and crosstetted door surrounds.

The earliest of such parallel examples is St. Anselm's School (Fig. 14), Croyden, Surry.<sup>84</sup> Reportedly constructed in 1708 from plans by Wren, St. Anselm's exhibits the usual five-by-three-bay facade, belt courses separating the floors, a brick parapet, interior end chimneys, rubbed brick window surrounds, and a deck-on-

hip roof. Rather than corner quoins of rubbed brick, the building has large bonded pilasters. Also, while the windows are not decreased in height from the first to the second floor, this does occur with the third floor windows. Although St. Anselm's is smaller in scale than Rosewell, the similarity in feeling is quite noticeable. The building exhibits another striking comparison with Rosewell: an arched-head window lighting the stair (Fig. 14a). The stairway at St. Anselm's also shows similarities to that in the Page house in regard to both location and detail.<sup>85</sup> A portion of its balusters are spiraled, and below the treads are carved brackets in the form of scrolled consoles. However, it is the exterior of the building that reveals the most significant similarity to Rosewell.



*Figure 14. Front elevation of St. Anselm's, Croydon, from Tunstan Small and Christopher Woodbridge, Houses of the Wren and Early Georgian Periods (New York: William Helbur, Inc., 1928), p.34.*

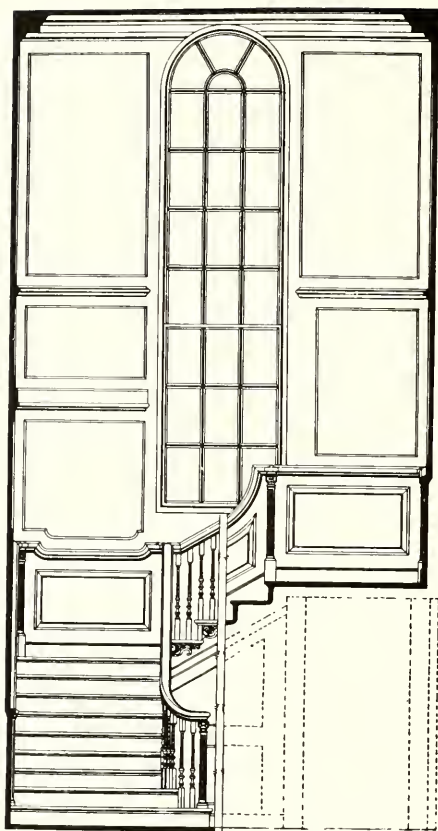


Figure 14a. Stairway, *St. Anselm's*, from *Small and Woodbridge*, p.40.

In contrast to *St. Anselm's*, a free-standing terrace house (Fig. 15) at No. 44 Great Ormond Street, London, is said to have been built in 1709, and occupied at one time by the French embassy. While the house is five bays wide, it differs from other free-standing houses of the period in regard to its off-center front entry. Also, it is 3 1/2 stories high, with dormers that are partially concealed by the parapet. However, there are other obvious similarities with *Rosewell*, such as the belt courses, keystones, rubbed brick, and shortened third-floor windows. Described as a "typical town house," the entrance hall is paved with white stone interspersed with small insets of black. The stair (Fig. 15a) is located in the entrance hall and is finished with turned balusters and brackets carved in console form. The newel, like that at *Rosewell*, turns back upon the stairway to the depth of the second

tread although it is not as richly carved as the Rosewell example.<sup>86</sup>

Among country houses, Lockleys (Fig. 16) in Hertfordshire, is a variation of the same Wren prototype. A relatively small manor, the construction of Lockleys was begun about 1717.<sup>87</sup> Of brick, the corner finish of the building is composed of pilasters rather than rubbed brick. The windows diminish in height from the first to the third floors, although only the second floor windows have aprons. The cornice is located between the second and third floors rather than below the parapet, visually reducing the verticality of the building. Despite Lockleys' more imposing appearance, it fits within the architectural tradition to which St.

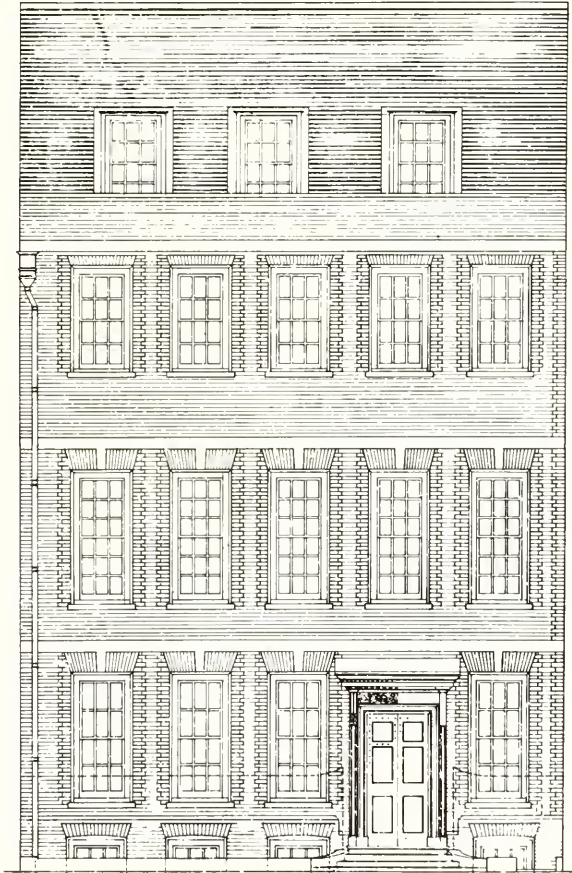


Figure 15. No. 44 Great Ormond Street, London, from *Small and Woodbridge*, p. 128.





*Figure 15a. Stairhall, No.44 Great Ormond Street, from Small and Woodbridge, p.136.*



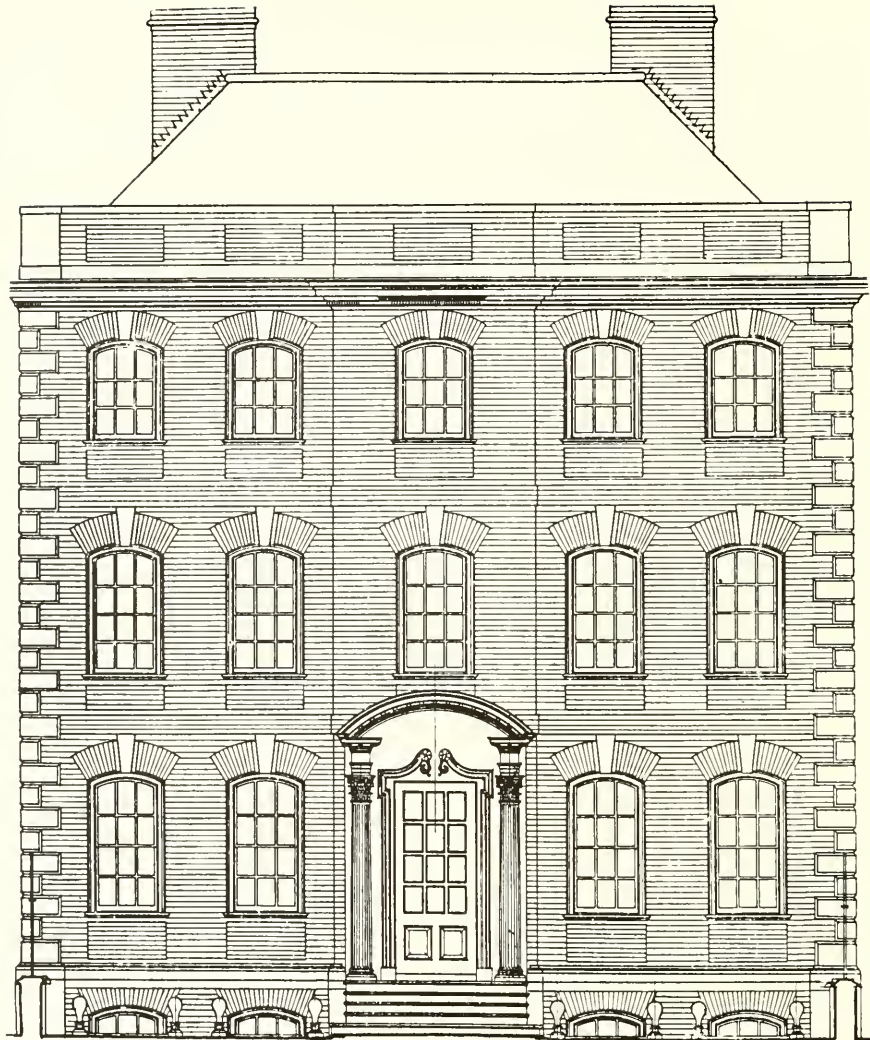
*Figure 16. Lockleys from the northwest, from H. Avray Tipping, English Homes, Period V, Volume 1: Early Georgian, 1714-1760 (London: Country Life, 1921), p.1.*

Anselm's and No. 44 Great Ormond Street belong, thereby illustrating the adaptability of the style. Lockleys' interior is difficult to analyze, given the few photographs available, but it would appear that its stairway is comparable in detail to those of the previously-examined London houses as well as to the stair at Rosewell. In addition, the stairwell's fascia is similar in height and carving design to that of the Page mansion.

A final example worthy of comparison, Rainham Hall (Fig. 17) in Essex, is virtually a contemporary of Rosewell.<sup>88</sup> The house was constructed for a gentleman who was a shipowner as well as a timber and stone merchant; his economic, if not social, position would have been fairly close to that of Mann Page. Rainham was built in 1729 and exhibits the familiar five-by-three bay facade, parapet, belt courses, shortened third-floor windows, rubbed brick, window keystones and aprons, and a deck-on-hip roof. Like Rosewell, Rainham is three bays deep, but is nonetheless square in plan. The house reveals a further similarity to the Page mansion in the use of an arched-head window directly over the rear door; this opening provides light for the stair, which rises over the door. While Rainham does not have end pavilions, the center bay on both the front and rear facades projects slightly, providing a greater appearance of narrowness and verticality.

Rainham's floor plan (Fig. 12) has one obvious resemblance to that of Rosewell: an off-center entrance hall. Although the stairway (Figs. 17b-c) is not located in the hall, its balusters, brackets, and handrail show similarities with those at Rosewell (Fig. 10). Other points of comparison include the stone-paved hall, crossettes on some of the door surrounds (Fig. 17a), and a minor stair. Although relatively little useful information survives regarding Rosewell's interiors, there is a generalized description in Lucy Page Saunders' *Leonora and the Ghost*. A daughter of Governor John Page, Mrs. Saunders stated that all of Rosewell's rooms were wainscoted and contained marble mantels. Rainham's rooms are also fully paneled and at least some of the mantels are of marble.<sup>89</sup>

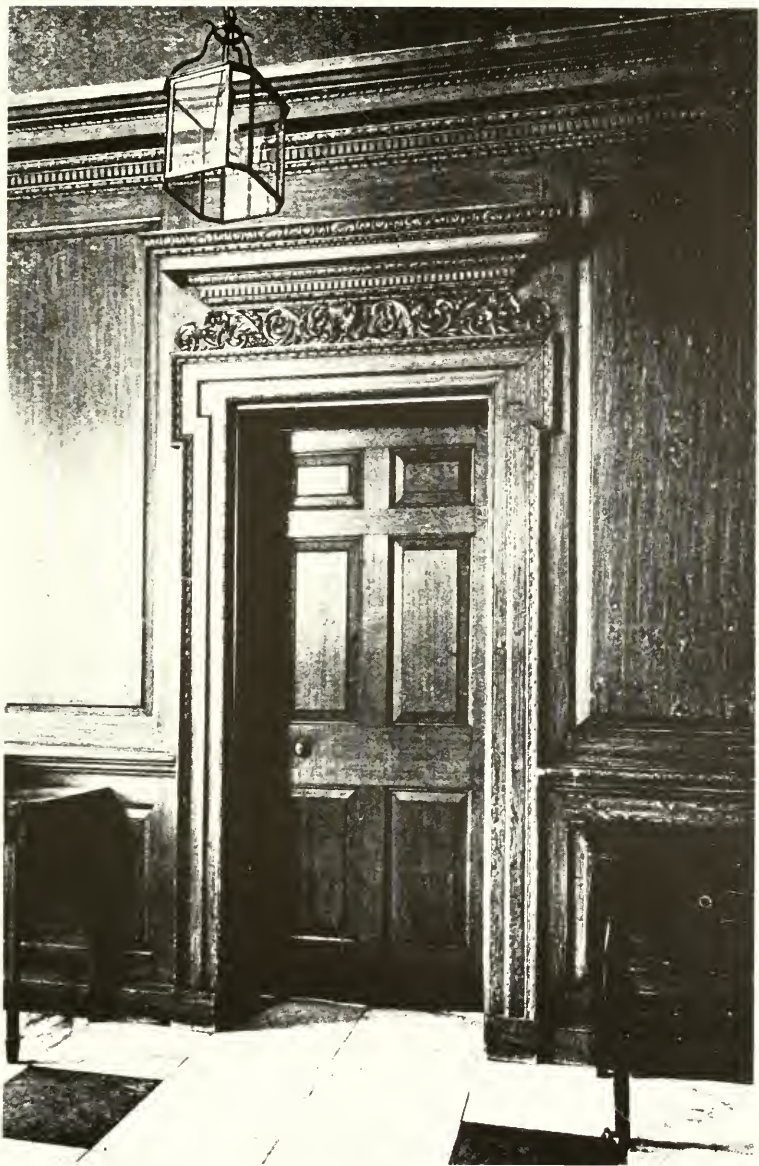
Obviously the architectural idiom employed in both houses is closely related. In England, a house such as Rainham is considered merely "a distinctive feature of English domestic architecture," although typical of the early Georgian period, but in the United States, a house such as Rosewell is considered to be "among the most elegant and pretentious of all colonial mansions."<sup>90</sup> While Rosewell might have been considered



*Figure 17. Rainham Hall, front elevation, from Small and Woodbridge, p.120.*

commonplace in Britain, it was a sophisticated building for its time and place. For this reason, those searching for prototypes for Rosewell have tended to look among sophisticated buildings in England. In seeking such comparisons, one realizes that too many exceptions have to be made for the scale and richness of such houses as Cound, Easton Neston, and Roehampton House when they are compared with Rosewell. While architectural differences certainly exist between Rosewell and more modest English





*Figure 17a. Entrance hall doorway, Rainham Hall, from Small and Woodbridge, p.121.*



Figure 17b. Stairway, Rainham Hall, from *Small and Woodbridge*.

structures such as St. Anselm's, 44 Great Ormond Street, Lockleys, and Rainham, the exceptions are less extreme and due more to variation in plan and detail than to size and grandeur. In both scale and decoration, Rosewell seems to fall between St. Anselm's and No. 44 Great Ormond Street on one hand and Lockleys on the other, with Rainham providing the closest direct parallel to the Page house in regard to these two points.



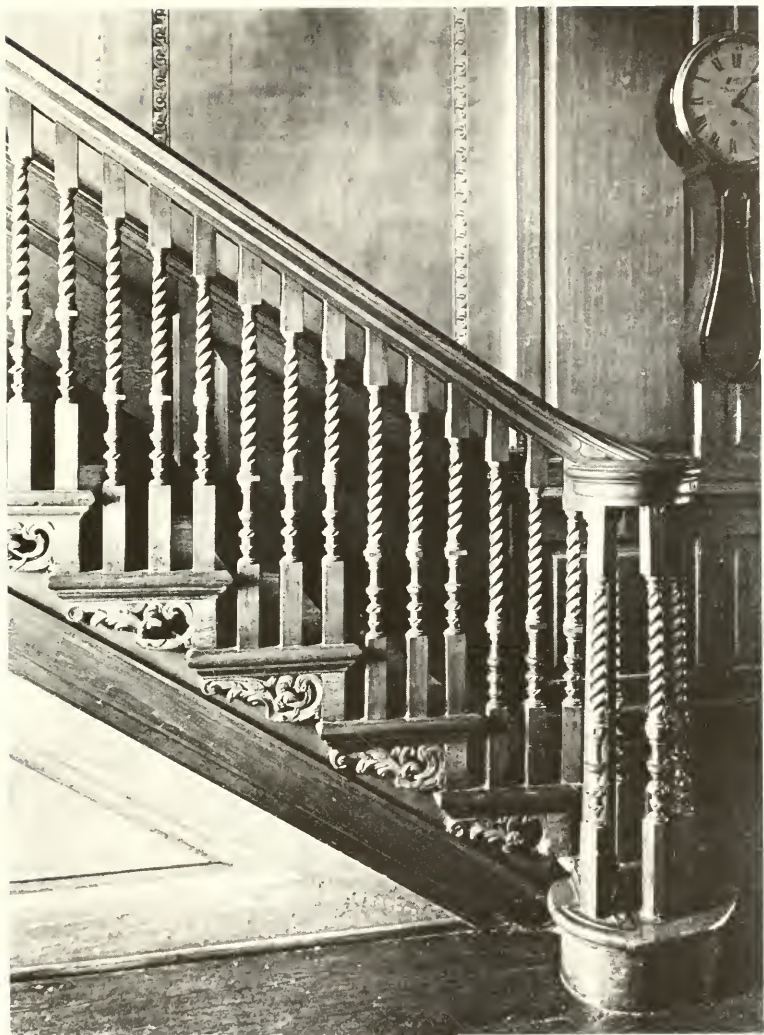


Figure 17c. Staircase, Rainham Hall, from *Small and Woodbridge*, p.123.

These four buildings are by no means the only comparative examples that can be cited. There are numerous others, such as Walden Place in Essex; Nos. 37 and 39 Stepney Green, London, with its arched-head stair window; Ormeley Lodge, Ham; Eagle House, Mitcham, with its lead-sheeted deck-on-hip roof and cupola; and the Bank House, Cambridgeshire.<sup>91</sup> All of these houses exhibit a clear Wren influence in addition to some of the

other strains of architectural ferment and influence by governmental regulations present in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Rosewell, which follows this tradition, may be seen as a particularly unusual dwelling during the colonial period in Virginia. The Page mansion, then, can be viewed as contemporary with buildings in England rather than being described as a dwelling fifty years out of date.

One other question remains to be considered regarding Rosewell's design, and that is the identification of the architect. As we have seen, various possibilities have been suggested, ranging from John Prince of Shropshire to John Tyler, who emigrated to Virginia during the second half of the seventeenth century. However, nothing more than conjecture surrounds the connection of such individuals with Rosewell. Mann Page's own role as the possible architect should not be overlooked. Having spent at least three years in England as a young man, Page would have been aware of the building boom there. It was typical of Virginians of Page's social status to be drawn to the study of classical architecture, and it is logical that he would have kept abreast of the pattern books that began to proliferate after the publication of *Vitruvius Britannicus* in 1715.<sup>92</sup> Due to the public's interest in architecture and decoration, a certain level or standard of taste was maintained even in provincial areas where little or no professional help would have been available. Having returned to Virginia about the same time that Alexander Spotswood became governor of the colony, Page had the opportunity to witness Spotswood's application of his experience in architectural design. The Governor's Palace was the first double-pile building in Virginia.<sup>93</sup> Spotswood's 1713 description of Page as "a young gentleman of a liberal education, good parts, and a very plentiful estate" could be considered especially accurate if Page indeed designed his own residence.

Supporting the possible presence of an architect in early eighteenth-century Virginia, strong similarities between Rosewell and several other Virginia buildings of the period may be noted. It is possible that the same person who designed Rosewell may have executed the elevations for Sabine Hall and Christ Church (Fig. 18). The exceptional detail of the brickwork of the Christ Church doorways compares favorably with Rosewell; the similarity between the nave entry (Fig. 18a) of the church and the south entry of Rosewell is particularly striking.



*Figure 18. Christ Church, Lancaster County, Virginia. MESDA Research File S-4769.*



*Figure 18a. Nave entry, Christ Church. MRF S-4769.*



Unfortunately, given the practically nonexistent records for the period in Gloucester County, the strongest statement that can be made about Rosewell's design is that it was executed "by [an anonymous architect] who worked with craftsmen well versed in the fashions of the pattern books."<sup>94</sup>

It is a mistake to compare Rosewell with grand examples of English country houses. While it could have withstood comparison with well-detailed brick dwellings of average size in Great Britain, it would have been dwarfed in scale and richness if placed next to one of the smaller examples of a country manor such as Chevening. This is not to deny Rosewell's importance and its elegance. Rather, it is a commentary on the relatively limited architectural and economic resources available in this country. Virginia was limited in its supply of sophisticated craftsmen at this early date, and the planters themselves were limited in the amount of finances they could allot to house construction. Although they may have wished to emulate the English gentry in regard to possessions and style of living, the colonials simply did not have the monetary means to do so except on a reduced scale. Although a number of Virginia planters owned thousands of acres of land as did their English contemporaries, the Virginia tracts, at least during the first half of the century, were often neither occupied nor cultivated and therefore produced no revenue. This was in considerable contrast to land use in England. English landowners possessed the economic means to indulge their passion for building. Ironically, even as Mann Page was building his mansion as an impressive demonstration of his family's prestige, he was also creating a burden of debt that virtually assured the eventual economic decline of his descendants and the deterioration of Rosewell itself.

Rosewell passed out of the Page family in 1838 when it was sold to Thomas Booth. Branded as vandalism by some and home improvement by others, his alterations to the house and its gardens included stripping out the paneling and marble mantels, replacing the lead roof with tin, changing the roof from deck-on-hip to low hip with pediments over the end pavilions, and cutting down the cedars lining the avenue which linked the house down to the York River. It is hard to judge whether these changes were positive or negative from an economic standpoint. Although the property's assessed value dropped from \$3,281.25 in 1828 to \$2,500 in 1848,

its sale price jumped from \$12,000 in 1838 to \$22,000 ten years later.<sup>95</sup> Economics aside, however, Booth's changes were aesthetic atrocities. From its position as the most outstanding example of early eighteenth-century Georgian architecture in Virginia, Rosewell was transformed into a stylistic cripple with only traces of its former elegance.

In 1848 Booth sold the property to John Catlett who retained it for only three years before selling it to Josiah Deans. Members of the Deans family lived at Rosewell until March, 1916, when a fire broke out and destroyed the mansion's interior. Rosewell was never inhabited again, and the walls have gradually crumbled and fallen. In the fall of 1978, the ruins were donated to the



*Figure 19. The ruins of Rosewell, ca. 1968, from Architecture in Virginia (New York: Walker and Co., Inc. for the Virginia Museum, 1968). By permission of the Virginia Museum, Richmond. Photograph by Richard Cheek.*

Gloucester Historical Society. While a reconstruction of the house would be prohibitively expensive, the ruins have been stabilized and the site is opened officially to the public on special occasions. The presence of a caretaker on the grounds has helped to prevent the vandalism and souvenir hunting that has plagued Rosewell and accelerated its deterioration. Also, it has made available to public view the ruins of Virginia's most ambitious colonial dwelling — ruins that amaze even as they sadden the visitor.

*Ms. Leviner is Curator of Exhibition Buildings for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. This article in its original form was presented in 1979 as partial completion of an honor's program in the history department at Virginia Commonwealth University.*

## FOOTNOTES

1. For a thorough account of the Page family genealogy, see Richard Channing Moore Page, *Genealogy of the Page Family in Virginia* (reprint of 1893 edition; Harrisonburg, Va.: C.J. Carrier Company, 1972). Unfortunately, the lack of Gloucester County records makes it necessary to rely on this secondary source as well as others cited below for a good deal of the information available on the Page family.
2. Within five years of his arrival, John Page was elected to the House of Burgesses, "Extracts from Proceedings of the House of Burgesses, 1652-1661," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (hereafter cited as *VMHB*), Vol. 8, No. 4 (April 1901), p. 389.
3. "Some Colonial Virginia Records, From the Originals, Virginia State Library," *VMHB*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (July 1903), p. 65, notes that Francis Page acted as clerk of the House of Burgesses in both 1688 and 1691, while in 1699 Matthew was listed as colonel and commander-in-chief of the Gloucester militia ("Virginia Militia Officers, 1699," *VMHB*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (October 1902), p. 215.
4. Matthew Page Andrews, "Matthew Page and Mary Mann Page," in Alexander Wilbourne Weddell (ed.), *A Memorial Volume of Virginia Historical Portraiture, 1585-1830* (Richmond: William Byrd Press, Inc., 1930), p. 131; "Berkeley Manuscripts," *William and Mary Quarterly* (hereafter cited as *WMQ*) (I), Vol. VI, No. 3 (January 1898, will of John Mann), p. 137; Carol Minor Tanner, "John Page of Rosewell" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1944), p. 3.
5. Richard Arthur Austen-Leigh, ed., *The Eton College Register, 1698-1752* (Eton, England: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co., Ltd., 1927), p. 258. There is also a notation in the entry for Mann Page that states an error was made in Joseph Foster's *Alumni Oxoniensis*. Austen-Leigh notes that Page is mistakenly described as being of "Abingdon, Berks" instead of Abingdon Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia. Unfortunately, the Oxford notation gives no more information about Page than does the Eton entry. See Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxoniensis: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714: Their Parentage, Birthplace and Year of Birth, with a Record of Their Degrees* (Oxford: Parker & Co., 1891-92), p. 1105.
6. "Extracts from the County Records," *VMHB*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (October 1900), p. 183. For a brief analysis of Wormeley's position within the county at the time of his death in 1701, see Darrett B. and Anita H. Rutman, *A Place in Time, Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650-1750* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1984), pp. 153-56.
7. See *WMQ* (I), Vol. II, No. 1 (July 1893), pp. 169-74, for an inventory of his library, and Louis B. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia: The Intellectual Qualities of the Early Colonial Ruling Class* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1940), pp. 197-210 for a discussion of Ralph Wormeley II. See also Gilbert Chinard, ed., *A Huguenot Exile in Virginia: Or Voyages of a Frenchman exiled for his Religion with a description of Virginia and Maryland* (New York: The Press of the Pioneers, Inc., 1934), pp. 141-2, for a visitor's first-hand description of Wormeley's Middlesex County estate; "Colonial Proceedings, 1716-17," *VMHB*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (April 1897), p. 365, fn.

8. As quoted in "Virginia Council Journals, 1726-1753," *VMHB*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (January 1924), p. 38; "Notes and Queries," *VMHB*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (January 1931), p. 65; Robert Carter to Mann Page, 5 December 1727, Carter Letterbook, 13 May 1727 - 23 July 1728, p. 76, Virginia Historical Society (VHS).
9. "Miscellaneous Colonial Documents," *VMHB*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 1909), pp. 147, 150. This title seems to be an informal rather than a formal one. Charles Davenant, 1656-1714, wrote several essays dealing with public revenues and finance, credit, debts, and foreign trade around the turn of the century. It would appear that one of the works by this author is the item referred to in Pole's catalogue.
10. "The Wormeley Family," *VMHB*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (July 1928), p. 287.
11. John Custis to William Byrd II, 30 March 1717, in *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, 1684-1776*, ed. by Marion Tinling (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1977), Vol. 1, p. 298; As quoted in Page, *Genealogy*, p. 65: "Alas, grief! She was a most affectionate wife, the best of mothers, and an upright mistress of her family, in whom the utmost gentleness was united with the most graceful suavity of manners and conversation."
12. See the Land Grant Card File, Virginia State Library, for a record of these grants.
13. William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year, 1619* (Richmond: Franklin Press, 1819; facsimile reprint, 1969, by the University Press of Virginia), Vol. 5, pp. 277-78; *Ibid.*
14. Fairfax Harrison (annotator), "The Will of Charles Carter of Cleve," *VMHB*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (January 1923), p. 48, fn. 18.
15. Robert "King" Carter Diary and Letterbooks (3807), Manuscripts Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia (UVA), 28 July 1724; *Ibid.*, Robert Carter to Mann Page, 22 December 1727.
16. Robert Carter to "My Good Daddy Pratt," Carter Letterbook, VHS, 8 August 1728.
17. Robert Carter to Mann Page, [2-14?] June 1729, Carter Letterbook, UVA; Robert Carter to Mann Page, 5 December 1727, Carter Letterbook, VHS, p. 77; *Ibid.*, Robert Carter to Mann Page, n.d. [probably 21 May 1728].
18. "Journals," *VMHB*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (January 1924), p. 41; "Virginia in 1726," *VMHB*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (April 1940), pp. 141, 144.
19. Edmund S. Morgan, *Virginians at Home: Family Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1952), p. 75.
20. For a description of Corotoman, see Carter L. Hudgins, "Patrician Culture, Public Ritual and Political Authority in Virginia, 1680-1740," (Ph.D. dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1984). pp. 248-258.
21. See T.H. Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling among the Gentry of Virginia," *WMQ* (III), Vol. 34, No. 2 (April 1977), pp. 239-257, for a convincing argument as to the social and symbolic functions of competitive activities among Virginia's gentry in the period 1680-1720. Also see Catole Shammas, "English-Born and Creole Elites in Turn-of-the-Century Virginia," in *The Chesapeake in the*



- Seventeenth Century, Essays on Anglo-American Society & Politics*, ed. by Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1979) for another thought-provoking study of colonial elites during this period. Together, these two analyses provide keen insights into the social, cultural, and political needs of colonial elites from 1680-1720.
22. Ivor Noel Hume, *Excavations at Rosewell in Gloucester County, Virginia, 1957-59*, Bulletin 225: Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, Paper 18, 1962, p. 156; "Virginia in 1732: The Travel Journal of William Hugh Grove," ed. by Gregory A. Stiverson and Patrick H. Butler, III, *VMHB*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (January 1977), p. 26: "Col. Page on the North of York river is reputed [to have] the best house in Virginia."
  23. The published tradition of the house having been constructed with two cupolas apparently originated in the mid-nineteenth century when a very crude engraving of Rosewell appeared in Bishop Meade's *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. [1857]), Vol. I, between pp. 332 and 333. However, the tradition is reinforced by the recollections of Lucy Page Saunders, youngest daughter of Governor John Page, in a Christmas story she published in 1876. *Leonora and the Ghost* is set at Rosewell whose roof is described as having a "turret" at each end. The east or main staircase reached only to the second floor. The west or minor stair stretched from cellar to roof, and the west turret or cupola would have allowed for the west stair to receive daylight on the third floor. The east turret was accessible only from the roof and was referred to as "the summer house." See Lucy Page Saunders, *Leonora and the Ghost* (Baltimore: Charles Harvey & Co., 1876), p. 3.
  24. See John Page's correspondence with John Norton, a London merchant, for references to this problem, in Frances N. Mason, ed., *John Norton & Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia, Being the Papers from their Counting Houses for the Years 1750 to 1795* (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1937). It is possible to make a rough estimate of what a house such as Rosewell might have cost if it had been built in London. There the cost of building a house during this period was estimated and based on the number of squares (100 square feet) a building would contain as well as the quality and height that was desired. This estimate was done by the architect who drew up the plan for the building. No. 10 St. James's Square, London, which was built about 1734 and was roughly comparable to Rosewell in quality provides a good comparison. The cost of the London house was £110 a square. Applying this figure to Rosewell, which was 59 feet long by 56 feet wide and three stories high, yields a figure of £10,900 in terms of size alone. This figure would not have included the flankers, outbuildings, furniture, and undertaker's fees, if any. See John Summerson, *Georgian London* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), p. 60. While these figures obviously do not apply to Virginia, they do give an idea of the financial scope of undertaking such a building during the period. One source that does give the cost of building a structure of comparable size in Virginia comes from Sir John Randolph who in 1737 estimated that the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg had cost upwards of £6,600 sterling (*Virginia Gazette*, 15-22 April 1737 [No. 38], p. 2, col. 1). Another interesting sidelight is the fact that Robert Carter apparently did not

- understand the system of charging by squares. In a letter to William Camp dated 15 July 1727, he writes "doing the work by Squares . . . is a way I am not acquainted with I would make a Particular agreemt. with him [the carpenter] what he is to do and know the Certainty of what I must pay him for it. . . ." Carter Letterbook, UVA, 15 July 1727.
25. John Clayton's statement regarding the drawing up of Page's will appears in "Journals," *VMHB*, Vol. 32, No. 1, (January 1924), pp. 43-45.
  26. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-43.
  27. Like his father, he had been sent to England to attend Eton but had been expelled due to drunkenness. Robert Carter to John Carter, 23 June 1731, and to Alderman Perry, 8 March 1731/32, Carter Letterbook, UVA.
  28. "Journals," *VMHB*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (January 1924), p. 41.
  29. Page, *Genealogy*, p. 58.
  30. See Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. V, p. 280: "And whereas the said testator [Mann Page I], at the time of his death, was considerably indebted unto several persons in Great Britain, and in this colony, more than the value of his slaves and personal estate amounted to; for a great part of which debts, the said testator had engaged, in his life time, to pay interest."
  31. Letter 18 July 1732, *Reports from Major William Gooch . . . to the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, co 5/1323, 1732-35*, Virginia State Library.
  32. Hening, *Statutes*, Vol. V, pp. 227-284.
  33. Robert Carter, *Letters of Robert Carter, 1720-1727, The Commercial Interests of a Virginia Gentleman*, ed. Louis B. Wright (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, reprint, 1970), p. 139.
  34. Robert Carter to Philip Perry, 2 March 1731/32, Carter Letterbook, UVA.
  35. *A Provisional List of Alumni, Grammar School Students, Members of the Faculty, and Members of the Board of Visitors of the College of William and Mary in Virginia, From 1673 to 1888* (Richmond: Division of Purchase and Printing, 1941), p. 31; *Ibid.*, p. 54.
  36. "Berkeley Manuscripts," *WMQ* (I), Vol. VI, No. 3 (January 1898), p. 145.
  37. Elizabeth Saunders Blair Stubbs, "Some Sheriffs, Deputy Sheriffs and Clerks of Gloucester County, Virginia, 1653-1850," *VMHB*, Vol. 42, No. 1, (January 1934), p. 66.
  38. There is confusion among several different sources as to the exact identity of Ann Corbin Tayloe. Her correct identification would appear to be that of the daughter of John Tayloe, of Richmond County, who died in 1747. See *Colonial Families of the United States of America*, ed. George Norbury Mackenzie (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1966), Vol. II, p. 514. This secondary source is corroborated by the will of John Tayloe II, dated 22 May 1773 where both Mann Page I and Mann Page II are named as executors of his estate and guardians of his children. See *VMHB*, Vol 17, No. 4, (October 1909), pp. 372-74.
  39. John Page, "Memoir," *The Virginia Historical Register*, Vol. III (1850), (Richmond: MacFarlane & Fergusson, 1850), p. 143; see *The Journal of John Harrower*, ed. Edward Miles Riley (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963), p. 184, fn. 92. After Mann Page's move to Spotsylvania

- County about 1765, he continued to fill local offices, for example, as a justice of the peace and as a vestryman of St. George's Parish.
40. This approximate construction date can be established roughly from the following sources. John Page writes in 1769 about the "Commencement of Housekeeping" which probably took place four years earlier upon his marriage to Frances Burwell. While his father was apparently still in Gloucester as of 25 June 1761, as the death of one of his children in Abingdon Parish indicates (*Register of Abingdon Parish*, p. 134), he had moved to Spotsylvania by 22 February 1770, because on that date he wrote John Norton for goods that were "to be landed where I live near Fredericksburg." (*Norton Papers*, p. 123).
  41. For an architectural description of both Mt. Airy and Mannsfield, see Thomas T. Waterman, *The Mansions of Virginia, 1706-1776* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1946), pp. 253-260 and pp. 264-268; *The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1795-1798*, ed. Edward C. Carter, II (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), Vol. I, pp. 160-161.
  42. This date is conjectural in the *Genealogy of the Page Family* but appears to be correct. Jefferson notes in 1764 that Page was courting "Fanny" Burwell. See Thomas Jefferson to William Fleming, 20 March 1764, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), Vol. I, p. 16.
  43. Will of Mann Page II, Spotsylvania County Court Records, Will Book E, p. 387.
  44. Mason, *John Norton*, p. 94.
  45. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
  46. Hume, *Excavations at Rosewell*, 156-229; p. 166.
  47. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
  48. Mason, *John Norton*, p. 172.
  49. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
  50. *Ibid.*, p. 490.
  51. Page, *Letters and Papers*, 12 March, 2 May 1795.
  52. Mason, *John Norton*, p. 199.
  53. Tanner, "John Page," p. 76.
  54. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
  55. Mason, *John Norton*, p. 199.
  56. Hume, *Excavations at Rosewell*, p. 156.
  57. Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, policy numbers 701, 1162, and 1910 as cited in Bennie Brown, Jr., "Rosewell: An Architectural Study of an Eighteenth Century Virginia Plantation" (M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1973), pp. 11, 13, and fn. 58, 59, and 68, p. 22.
  58. For a discussion of various aspects of colonial America's economy, see John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985, for the Institute of Early American History and Culture).
  59. John Page married twice and had a total of twenty children, Page, *Genealogy*, pp. 78-81.

60. William Byrd II, *The London Diary (1717-1721) and Other Writings*, ed. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 506; the date 1726 can be derived from Robert Carter's will of that date in which he leaves his daughter, Judith Page, £300 for the furnishing of his son-in-law's house when finished, in *VMHB*, Vol V, No. 4 (April 1898), pp. 427-28; Waterman, *Mansions*, p. 112.
61. Brown's study of "Rosewell," pp. 72, 86, suggests the possibility that the approach to the mansion was from Carter's Creek as opposed to the York River. Approaching the house from the creek would make the north entrance as feasible a choice for the main avenue as the south entrance.
62. As noted earlier, the existence of two cupolas is depicted in an inaccurate wood engraving of Rosewell in Bishop Meade's *Old Churches* (see note 23). That there actually were two cupolas is confirmed by Saunders, *Leonora and the Ghost*, p. 3. Mrs. Saunders was the youngest daughter of Governor John Page and remembered the pre-1838 Rosewell when the house was still unaltered.
63. *Ibid.*; Hume, *Excavations at Rosewell*, p. 177. Hume's excavations at Rosewell in 1957-59 uncovered fragments of marble flooring slabs (one white Purbeck and the other black Belgian) which he concludes came from Rosewell's main hall. The interior, other than room arrangement, is only included peripherally in this analysis for two reasons. First, most interior woodwork probably was installed at the direction of Mann Page II and this study is concerned with the first phase of the house. However, the few photographs of the interior that are available have been included to give a feel for the space involved, as have the interiors of comparable English houses for the sake of comparison. Second, most of the woodwork and the mantels were ripped out in 1838 and the surviving photographs only hint at the mansion's apparently fully paneled interiors. Any discussion of the interior woodwork would only be highly conjectural. One surprising survival is a piece of seating furniture now at the Virginia Historical Society. According to family tradition and known as the Rosewell stool, it is constructed from the newel post of the west or minor stair of the house while the base consists of the capitals of two Ionic pilasters possibly from the great hall. See Virginia Historical Society, *Occasional Bulletin*, #27, October 1973, pp. 13-15.
64. Waterman, *Mansions*, pp. 32-33, however, discusses the possibility of the Governor's Palace in Williamsburg originally having had such an entrance hall. Marcus Whiffen also includes a discussion of a possible great hall in the palace in *The Public Buildings of Williamsburg* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, 1958), pp. 63-65; Noel Hume, *Excavations at Rosewell*, p. 160; Waterman, *Mansions*, p. 116; Brown, "Rosewell," p. 87.
65. This possibility is suggested by a reference to Celia Fiennes' journal where upon visiting Newby Hall in Yorkshire she comments on there being "2 dining rooms and drawing rooms, one for the summer with a marble floor," *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes* (London: The Cresset Press, 1949), p. 85.
66. [John Page] *A Deed of Gift To My Dear Son, Captain Matt. Page* (Philadelphia: Henry B. Ashmead, 1856), p. iv.; Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1755, defines closet as a "small room of privacy and retirement."

67. Dell Upton, "Vernacular Domestic Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 17, Nos. 2/3 (Summer/ Autumn 1982), p. 98; *Ibid.*, p. 103.
68. This characteristic was also in evidence at Coleshill in Berkshire. See Margaret Jourdain, *English Interiors in Small Houses, from the Restoration to the Regency, 1660-1728* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., reissued, 1933), p. 109. See also Paula Henderson's "Life at the Top," *Country Life*, 3 January 1985, pp. 6-9, for a survey of sixteenth and seventeenth-century roofs and how they were not only decorative but also useful for exercise and for obtaining a panoramic view of the countryside.
69. Saunders, *Leonora and the Ghost*, p. 6.
70. Thomas T. Waterman and John A. Barrows, *Domestic Colonial Architecture of Tidewater Virginia* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), p. 87; Waterman, *Mansions*, p. 112.
71. *Ibid.*; King George County, Virginia, Inventory Book 1, 1721-44, 6 July 1727, p. 101, inventory of a John Prince "clerk" [clerk did not necessarily mean clerk of the court, but could have been a minister or a scrivener]; Waterman, *Mansions*, p. 108; John Fitzhugh Millar also supports the theory that there was an architect, "whether or not his name was Prince" in *The Architects of the American Colonies, or Vitruvius Americanus* (Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishers, 1968), p. 30. However, I am omitting him from the following discussion since his work is in large part derived from Waterman and in other areas is quite speculative, i.e., one conjectural drawing is cited as "probably Rippon Hall, Corotoman, Warner Hall, or Turkey Island" (p. 34).
72. Waterman, *Mansions*, p. 107.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 103; Brown, "Rosewell," p. 5.
74. Whiffen, *Public Buildings of Williamsburg*, p. 66.
75. Brown, "Rosewell," p. 6.
76. Claude O. Lanciano, Jr., *Rosewell, Garland of Virginia* (Charlotte, N.C.: The Delmar Co., for Gloucester County and the Gloucester Historical and Bicentennial Committee, 1978), p. 62. Unfortunately, this volume is not footnoted so its usefulness is somewhat limited; *Ibid.*
77. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
78. Waterman, *Mansions*, pp. 92, 108-9. Telephone conversation with Mark Girouard, 29 April 1987, regarding the plan of Coleshill, which has a similar entrance hall transverse passage with minor stairs at each end.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 8; Ralph Dutton, *The Age of Wren* (New York: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1951, p. 89; for example, Olive Cook, *The English House through Seven Centuries* (Camden, N.J.: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1968). By 1715, Baroque architecture was in the minds of many Englishmen linked with Catholicism and absolutism. The Whigs favored the Palladianism espoused by Inigo Jones, England's first classical, native-born architect, almost one hundred years earlier. In adopting Palladio and Jones, the Whig aristocracy turned their collective back on the distasteful, foreign influence of the Baroque and its theatrical excesses and revived the pure architectural vocabulary of a native son. For a discussion of these links between politics and architecture, see John Summerson's *Architecture in Britain, 1530 to 1830* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, reprinted 1969), pp. 189-191.



80. As T. F. Teddaway notes in his history of London's rebuilding: "In many important respects the [Rebuilding] Act designed [a Londoner's] house for him. The heights of the storeys, thickness of the walls, and front elevation; the materials to be used, the permissible scantlings, and the relationship of floor and street levels, were all laid down." T.F. Teddaway, *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940), p. 129.
81. John Summerson, *Georgian London* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), pp. 53 and 63; *Ibid.*, p. 51; H. Avray Tipping, *English Homes, Period V, Volume 1, Early Georgian, 1714-1760* (London: Country Life, 1921), p. 237. This same opinion is shared by Daniel D. Reiff, *Small Georgian Houses in England and Virginia, Origins and Development through the 1750s* (Toronto: University of Delaware Press, 1986), pp. 290-91.
82. Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 52.
83. See Jourdain, *English Interiors*, p. 5, for a discussion of vernacular versus Palladian architecture.
84. Tunstan Small and Christopher Woodbridge, *Houses of the Wren and Early Georgian Periods* (New York: William Helburn, Inc., 1928), pp. 31-39.
85. As Margaret Jourdain points out in her book *English Interiors*, p. 91, smaller houses were "generally entered in the centre by a door opening on to a vestibule or hall, which in houses of middling size, contained the staircase."
86. Small and Woodbridge, *Houses*, pp. 127-139; *Ibid.*, p. 129.
87. Tipping, *English Homes*, p. 2.
88. Small and Woodbridge, *Houses*, pp. 115-126.
89. Saunders, *Leonora and the Ghost*, p. 3; Tipping, *English Homes*, p. 244.
90. Jourdain, *English Interiors*, p. 5; Marshall B. Davidson, *The American Heritage History of Notable American Houses* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1971), p. 86.
91. Cook, *English House*, pp. 190-91; Small and Woodbridge, *Houses*, p. 16; *Ibid.*, frontispiece; *Ibid.*, p. 55; Dutton, *Age of Wren*, p. 107.
92. Although there is no inventory of Mann Page's library, two intriguing hints are suggested in Louis Wright's *The First Gentlemen of Virginia*. Mann Page's first father-in-law, Ralph Wormeley II, is shown as having owned a copy of Estienne and Liebault's *Maison Rustique, or, The Country Farm*. John Carter is also listed as possessing a copy of this book in his library, as well as *The French Garden*, translated by John Evelyn, and an unidentified book of architecture. Robert Carter, brother and heir of John who died in 1690, later became Mann Page's second father-in-law. Unfortunately, little more than speculation can be done since there is nothing concrete to be drawn from these two facts other than making note of them. Wright, *The First Gentlemen of Virginia*, pp. 207, 246.
93. Jourdain, *English Interiors*, p. 15; for design prototypes for the Palace, see Nancy Halverson Schless, "Dutch Influence on the Governor's Palace, Williamsburg," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4 (December 1969), pp. 254-270. As noted earlier, Whiffen in *Public Buildings*, pp. 63-65, explores the possibility of there having been

a great room on both the first and second floors of the Palace in its early history. If this were the case, this may very well have influenced Page to select a floor plan with a similar configuration.

94. Colin Amery, *Three Centuries of Architectural Craftsmanship* (New York: Nicholas Publishing Co., 1977), p. viii.
95. Brown, "Rosewell," pp. 12, 13.

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Figure 1. Mrs. William Bernard, *miniature portrait ca. 1789, artist unknown, watercolor on ivory, 2 3/16 X 1 5/8. MRF S-6069.*

## *Precious Artifacts: Women's Jewelry in the Chesapeake, 1750-1799*

M. J. GIBBS

The miniature of Fannie Hipkins Bernard (Fig. 1) challenges any assumption that the majority of Chesapeake ladies were considerably less bejeweled than their English and continental contemporaries. With the exception of finger rings and shoe buckles, which Fannie may have been wearing, her likeness portrays some of the most fashionable pieces of jewelry favored by Chesapeake ladies during the second half of the eighteenth century: a necklace, earrings, sprigs for the hair, and miniatures. Representative of Chesapeake women who could afford such finery, Fannie was born in 1775, the daughter of prominent merchant John Hipkins of Port Royal, Virginia. At the time of Fannie's marriage to William Bernard, 9 April 1789, her father presented her with Belle Grove plantation on the Rappahanock River in King George County; the manor had been built about 1770.<sup>1</sup>

Although Chesapeake ladies may have been modestly adorned by English and European standards, silversmith's advertisements reveal that they eagerly followed the fashions abroad. However, jewelry styles prevalent in the Chesapeake are often difficult to determine precisely in view of the fact that late seventeenth and early eighteenth century jewelry continued to be worn in the last half of the eighteenth century. Portraits provide an essential primary source regarding the history of fashion and style, revealing significant information about the most personal aspects of material wealth. Inventories, wills, merchant's accounts, and silversmiths' notices reinforce the visual evidence of the paintings. It should be observed that portraits were a luxury largely confined to the affluent, and that they may represent artistic license on the part of the limner or even a deliberate exaggeration of personal finery directed by the sitters themselves.



Figure 2. "A New and ACCURATE MAP of VIRGINIA & MARYLAND, etc." from Bowen, Emanuel, *A Complete or Distinct View of the Known World* (London, 1752). Engraving with wash tints, 12 3/4 X 9. MRF S-13769.

Only a small amount of Chesapeake-owned jewelry has survived intact, making a detailed study difficult.<sup>2</sup> The loss of early jewelry through deterioration, shifts in taste, and economic factors has been significant. Many broken pieces or old settings were reset into "the newest Fashions." Larger pieces not infrequently were disassembled and divided among the heirs of a former owner.



A considerable number of pieces were simply lost; some of these continue to surface in archaeological excavations of early historical sites.

“Jewellery”, as it was frequently spelled in the eighteenth century, provides a strong statement regarding certain aspects of life in the early Chesapeake. Like other highly visible material culture such as Palladian manors, sumptuous dress, and elegant furniture, the existence and use of jewelry was dependent upon an economic, social, and political system that shaped the Chesapeake world.<sup>3</sup> The actual settlement of the region was partially motivated by the desire of English fortune-seekers to find gold, silver, and precious stones in the new world. In 1608, Captain John Smith listed among the first emigrants to Jamestown a “Jeweller,” two refiners, two goldsmiths, and “divers others to the number of 120.” In their gleeful anticipation, some of these first settlers even dug up what they thought to be yellow gold but in reality proved to be just sand. Captain Smith observed that “there was no talke, no hope, no worke, but dig gold, wash gold, refine gold, loade gold . . . never any thing more . . . than to see all necessary busines neglected, to fraught such a drunken ship with so much gilded dirt.”<sup>4</sup> In 1619 Michael Drayton published an “Ode to the Virginian Voyage” which contained the verse “And cheere, fully at sea/ Successe you will entice/ To get the pearle and gold,/ And ours to hold,/ Virginia/ Earth’s onely paradise.”<sup>5</sup>

Before the first quarter of the seventeenth century ended, the catalogue of the trades most needed by the Virginia settlements had changed significantly. Instead of pearl seekers, useful artisans were needed. The quest for gold and pearls in the Chesapeake had been replaced by the real profits which lay in the production of another sort of “gold”: tobacco.

Some of the earliest jewelry surviving in the Chesapeake is associated with Flowerdew Hundred, one of the earliest English settlements in the New World; Flowerdew was one of seven “plantations” established in 1618 to provide equal representation.<sup>6</sup> In the foundations of a 1620-50 hall-and-parlor house which existed on this site, archaeologists have uncovered several rings. One of these is a brass ring; a second ring of gold (Fig. 3) remains only as a fragment, ornamented with a stamped herringbone pattern. A third example, a plain gold ring (Fig. 3a) of the mid-to-late seventeenth century, is engraved inside with the legend “Grace mee with acceptance.”<sup>7</sup> This may have been a



Figure 3. Fragment of a gold ring, 1620-50, Flowerdew Hundred site, James City County, Virginia. Courtesy the Flowerdew Hundred Foundation, Hopewell, Virginia.



Figure 3a. Gold “posey” ring, 1620-50, Flowerdew Hundred site, with the touchmark “TS” and the engraved inscription “Grace mee with acceptance” on the inside of the band. Courtesy the Flowerdew Hundred Foundation.

posey ring, the vogue for which had emerged in sixteenth and seventeenth century England. These sentimental objects were intended to express the emotional bond between two lovers, although they also contained inscriptions that were instructional in nature. Typical seventeenth century English posey rings were engraved with messages such as “Time Lessenth Not My Love,” “As God Decreed So We Agreed,” “Never To Change,” and “This Spark Will Grow.”<sup>8</sup> Other Virginia sites also have yielded specimens of early jewelry. A link from a bracelet with a chalcedony stone was excavated in an archaeological context of 1620-60.<sup>9</sup> A gold gimmel—interlocking rings—of c. 1650-75 with the inscription “Time Shall Tell, I Love Thee W[ell]” was excavated at the River Creek site, Poquoson, York County.<sup>10</sup> A

gold ring inscribed "Fear God! Mary Broadnax" and bearing the maker's mark "B" was excavated at the Shields Tavern site in Williamsburg. Mary was the daughter of early eighteenth century Williamsburg goldsmith John Broadnax (working c. 1697-1719), who may well have made the ring himself. It is also possible that Broadnax' father, a goldsmith in England, made the ring. As the size of the ring indicates, Mary was eight to twelve years old when she lost it.<sup>11</sup>

Early Chesapeake gentry, considering themselves to be Englishmen, quite naturally espoused English taste in manners, dress, and material goods. This attitude is evident in a 1688 letter written by William Fitzhugh of Virginia: "I esteem it as well politic as reputable, to furnish my self with a handsom Cupboard of plate which gives my self the present use & credit. . . ." <sup>12</sup>

The evidence of jewelry in the Chesapeake is better documented after the mid-eighteenth century due not only to a larger amount of surviving primary research material, but also to the greater number of existing pieces. Articles of jewelry, along with other such luxuries, were more eagerly sought when the economy of the region shifted from an emphasis upon land-gathering to the amenities which in a very real sense served as barometers of social status. Tobacco was the prevailing medium of exchange in the acquisition of finery. In the many warehouses located along the Chesapeake shore, public inspectors rated the tobacco and gave the planters negotiable certificates called "crop notes" in the amount to be converted into credit. Such credit frequently was carried over many years; the accrued interest often grew into significant sums.

Crop notes were not the only means of exchange, since a relatively limited amount of British paper was in circulation. A larger amount of American currency was in use, but it carried a smaller rate of exchange. Even more limited in availability, but more useful in providing material which could be wrought into plate or jewelry, was foreign coinage, principally English, Spanish, and Portugese silver and gold pieces. The most common was the Spanish silver eight-real, which was variously known in America as the "piece of eight" or "dollar."<sup>13</sup>

Chesapeake gentry were able to purchase luxuries through merchants and factors in England or local merchants and silversmiths. The records of firms such as John Norton & Sons, a London mercantile and factoring establishment that operated in Virginia from 1750 to 1795, provide evidence of how

Chesapeake citizens acquired finery.<sup>14</sup> Operating much as precursors of the modern mail-order business, firms like Norton could supply any bauble imaginable. A Norton invoice of 29 December 1771 bore the notation that the goods enumerated were to be sent with "all speed possible" to Mrs. Catherine Rathell in Williamsburg, Virginia. The order, among other items, included:

8 pair of very best Neat Paste Shoe Buckles from 30/ to 50/ a pair

12 pair of Neat high Thread Paste Knee Do 1 3/4 Inch Long at 10 or 11/ a ps.

12 pr. of handsome New fashion Gilt Shoe Do With knee to Match but not very small

18 pair of Plaited Carved Show Buckles. I bought them in London last July for 2/ a pr. . . .

3 Good Second hand Silver Watches Cuped [sic] from 50/ to L3.

3 Neat Do — Do Pinch Back With plain Green & Blue fish Skin Cases

1 Gross of Bone or Ivory Bodkings

3 Dozn. of Silver — Do . . .

12 Handsome Necklaces of Diferent Sorts & Coulers Set in Silver and Some with Earrings from 18/ to 20/ a ps.

3 Garnet Sprigs from 9 to 12/aps.

Mrs. Rathell was a milliner; research has revealed that Williamsburg milliners frequently sold jewelry.<sup>15</sup> In Purdie & Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* for 5 May 1774, Mrs. Rathell offered "[silver] Coral and Bells, Paste, Marcasite, Pearl, and Bead Necklaces and Earrings . . . Etwee cases . . . Brooches, Paste Sprigs and Pins. . . ."

The profitable Virginia mercantile trade enticed an increasing number of British merchants to open stores along the Chesapeake waterways. Among them was William Allason, a Scot who in 1760 opened a store for trading on the Rappahannock River at Falmouth, Virginia. Although he principally stocked household necessities, Allason also sold jewelry. His firm received goods from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Whitehaven, Leeds, and Glasgow. He exchanged goods for tobacco as well as other produce such as grains and hemp. Allason's stock ran the gamut of goods from fowling pieces to salt, and from turpentine to lace. Of the jewelry which he carried, necklaces and earrings appeared to average less than £1; rings, with the exception of one gold ring,

averaged around 3s or less.<sup>16</sup>

A study of Allason's store records, including invoices, cash sales, and inventories between 1760 and 1776, reveals a preponderance of shoe and knee buckles and sleeve buttons in relation to other items such as necklaces, earrings, gold rings and a few aigrettes. The majority of necklaces were listed without any description; a few were listed as simply black, white, wax, or green beads. Earrings were not described. Sleeve buttons were regularly listed, and included gold, "Pearle," Bristol stone, and silver. Among the shoe buckles carried by Allason was a 1776 entry for a "fine stone shoe buckle" valued at £2.10.0; others listed at various times included a few silver buckles, but other alloys were recorded more frequently. Most pairs averaged between 3s and considerably less than £1. Other items falling within the 3s range included prayer books, a horn comb, one pint of rum or a paper snuff box.<sup>17</sup>

Chesapeake silversmiths both made and imported jewelry. Their advertisements for such wares were increasingly evident by the middle of the eighteenth century. On 29 May 1752 Williamsburg silversmith James Craig advertised that he had "just imported a new Assortment of Silver Work: Likewise Diamonds, Amethists, &c. of great Value. . . ."<sup>18</sup> In *The Virginia Gazette* for 18 April 1776, James Hamilton, a goldsmith from London who had established himself in Fredericksburg, advertised that he made and sold "all sorts of gold and silver work, in the neatest manner . . . gold rings, tortoiseshell rings lined with gold, gold lockets for childrens necks . . . with many other things in gold and silver too tedious to insert." The *Times and Alexandria Advertiser* for 31 July 1797 carried the notice of the silversmith Anthony Cayol, who advertised that he had received from Europe a "complete assortment of GOLD JEWELLERY, of the most fashionable taste and admirable elegance." Many such artisans billed themselves as goldsmiths, although American silversmiths actually worked very little gold. Most artisans in the Chesapeake did not produce a significant amount of hollow ware; flatware and the simpler forms of jewelry were better suited to the capabilities of most shops. This seems evident in a notice by Noel Waddill who advertised in Richmond's *Virginia Gazette or the American Advertiser* for 30 March 1782 as a "Goldsmith," announcing that he "makes and sells all kinds of SMALL PLATE and JEWELLERY, at the lowest prices, mends all kinds of the same, and gives the best prices for old gold and silver. . . ."





Figure 4. Steel or casehardened iron punches (ca. 1806-25) used by the Salem, N.C. silversmith John Vogler for forming clasps and possibly brooches. Courtesy Old Salem, Inc. MRF S-14122.

Our knowledge concerning the technology of jewelry production is relatively sparse. Information such as that contained in Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire des sciences, des arts et des métiers* is useful, although one must be cautious in ascribing continental practices to Britain and America. Specialized tools for making jewelry are exceptionally rare. Implements (Fig. 4) used by the early nineteenth century North Carolina silversmith John Vogler may be considered representative of those used by earlier silversmiths in the Chesapeake. The 1781 inventory of the estate of Richard Veale, a silversmith in Northampton County, North Carolina, lists tools which indicate that Veale was making articles of jewelry used with wearing apparel:

. . . A Sett of Black and Silver Smiths Tools, To wit 1 Anvil and Bellows, 1 Vice & Hedge [sic] . . . 3 pair of Tongs, 3 Screw Plates 46 Files 40 Carving and Engraving tools, 1 Small hand Vice & Bench 2 Small Hammers, 1 Scraper & 1 Burnisher . . . 2 pair of Nippers, 2 Drill Stocks, 1 Blow Pipe, 1 pair of Compasses, 26 Buckle Patterns a pair of Brass Plyers . . . 1 1/2 Doz. Silver Buttons Suitable for a Coat, & 2 1/2 Doz. Do. Waistcoat Do. 2 pairs Do. Shoe Buckles & 13 Ditto Unfinished 2 pair Ditto Knee Buckles & 2 Do. Unfinished, 2 Ditto Stock Buckles & 1 Do. Unfinished 8 pair Ditto Sleeve Buttons Unfinished 3 Ounces of Filings & Rough Silver & 4 P[ennyweights] . . . Gold and Filings."<sup>19</sup>

Early silversmiths were versatile, and from economic necessity often practiced other related trades as well as merchandising. The Annapolis *Maryland Gazette* for 11 March 1762 attests to such diversity in an advertisement by silversmith John Inch, who

gave notice that

he still carries on his Silversmith's and Jeweller's Business, buys Gold and Silver, and keeps Tavern as formerly; and has provided himself with a very good House Painter and Glazier lately from London, who shall work for any Person very reasonably. He also keeps good Passage-Boats, and has now of his own, and others, Vessels that are fit to carry Grain, &c. to and from any Part of Chesapeak-Bay; he has also for Sale, a Convict Servant Woman's Time, lately imported, who is a good Staymaker; a great Quantity of Oakum, Ship Bread, Delph, and Stone Ware of divers Sorts, too tedious to mention.

As one researcher has noted: "Although there was no uniformity in the manner in which the crafts of silversmithing, jewellery making, and watch and clockmaking were combined, there appear to have been relatively few silversmiths who did not, to some extent, engage in the jewellery business."<sup>20</sup>

The importation of jewelry was a slow affair, whether for a private individual, a merchant, or a silversmith. The time period which elapsed in sending an order to England, having it filled by a variety of merchants, and packed and shipped to America could vary from three months to a year; the average time was probably about five or six months.<sup>21</sup> Gold and silver work made in the Chesapeake no doubt was influenced stylistically by imported pieces. Williamsburg silversmith Patrick Beech's advertisement in *The Virginia Gazette* for 6 October 1774 noted that he "Begg leave to inform the Publick, that he makes and sells all Sorts of Gold, Silver, and Jewellery Work, after the newest Fashions, and at the lowest Price for ready Money only." The "newest Fashions" would have been understood to be those prevalent in London.

In addition to gold and silver coinage in circulation, silversmiths relied upon broken, damaged, and out-of-fashion pieces of silver as sources of metal from which new work could be wrought. There is ample evidence in the Chesapeake that this practice of recycling reduced the quantity of early plate and jewelry we have to study today. For example, in 1773 James Geddy, Jr. of Williamsburg advertised that he would pay "9s. Proc. or 6s. 8d. Virginia Currency per ounce, for good Old Silver; and 6£. 13s 4d. Proc. or 5£. Virginia Currency, per Ounce, for Gold." In 1774 Patrick Beech advertised that he gave the highest prices for

“OLD GOLD, SILVER, OR LACE either in Cash or Exchange.”<sup>22</sup>  
 In the spring of 1768 James Craig sent a package to John Norton with the following directions:

. . . You will please to get what things I wrote for from Mr. Robert Cruickshank Goldsmith in the Old Jewry, he is acquainted wt. my manner of Describing what things I want as I have had things from him, he will give you the highest price for the silver The Box Contains

24 1/2 oz. Guilt lace a 6/3	7	7	0
13 oz. silver Ditt a 6/	3	18	4
23 Dollers wt. 20 oz a 5/7	5	11	8
3 Guineas	3	3	0
	£ 20	0	0

I dare say Mr. Cruikshank will give that price at least & I hope more please desire him to get ye Jewelers work, Toys & Cutlery from one Mr. William Webb, the silver work Mr. Cruikshank will make, I had some things was Bot. from Mr. Webb latly I think was the best things I ever had since I came to Virga. . . .

The package was to be addressed to Craig “Goldsmith in Williamsburg.”<sup>23</sup> The “toys” which Craig mentioned probably had nothing to do with the amusement of children, but rather described small accessories such as seals, watch keys, and thimbles. Samuel Johnson, in his *Dictionary of the English Language* first published in London and revised eight times during the eighteenth century, suggested “A petty commodity: a trifle: a thing of no value” as the primary definition of “toy.”

The Easton, Maryland silversmith Joseph Bruff advertised in 1794 that “. . . Those who furnish Gold or Silver for large Jobs, will be favoured in the Price of Workmanship.”<sup>24</sup> Chesapeake silversmiths generally experienced a scarcity of raw materials, which was ironic in view of the energetic quest for precious metals that had provided one impetus for settling the region.

Silversmiths also used advertised lotteries as a means of selling jewels and plate. As early as 1737 Williamsburg silversmith Alexander Kerr took an entire page in *The Virginia Gazette*, proposing to sell 400 tickets at one pistole each and give 80 prizes worth a total of 400 pistoles at “common saleable prices.” Literally defined, a pistole was the Spanish quarter-doubloon, which was worth about four dollars, although gold coins of other nation-

alities having the same value were loosely known as pistoles. Among the prizes in Kerr's lottery were "One large Brilliant Diamond Ring, with a small Brilliant on each Side; One Solitair, or Breast Jewel, set with One large Amethyst in the Middle, One large Amethyst Drop, Three Garnets, Four Emeralds, and Nine Rose Diamonds; One Gold chas'd Box, with an Egyptian Pebble at the Top and Bottom. . . ." <sup>25</sup>

Such lotteries were common through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1786, Johnson and Riley, silversmiths in Baltimore, held a lottery for the disposal of a small quantity of gold and silver plate. Included was a diamond ring for £4:10:00 and a topaz ring for £3. <sup>26</sup> Samuel Brooks, a jeweler, engraver and silversmith, advertised in *The Norfolk Herald* on 30 November 1799 that "The Jewellery Raffle, Intended for this Evening, is . . . POSTPONED till WEDNESDAY next. Those who would wish to obtain Tickets, are requested to apply immediately to Sam. Brooks."

Chesapeake silversmiths made or repaired jewelry, principally small pieces, of either gold or silver. William and George Richardson placed a notice in the Richmond *Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser* for 27 September 1787 noting that they had "on hand an elegant assortment of silver work and jewellery" as well as "HAIR DEVICES, MOURNING and other RINGS executed in the neatest manner. . . ." Less than a year later, an interesting account of a theft of jewelry from the Richardson shop was published in the same newspaper:

On Saturday last, at a General Court held in this City, the following prisoners received sentence of death, viz . . . James Vance, from Frederick for burglary. They are to be executed on Friday the 30th of next month . . . David Lock and John Franklin, from Frederick, associates with Vance, in robbing Mr. Richardson's shop of watches, rings, &c. were severally burnt in the hand, and as a farther conviction for their offence, were by the unanimous sentence of the court, ordered to be confined in the public jail one year without bail or mainprise. <sup>27</sup>

In a typical account of the late 1760s, Edenton silversmith John Copeland billed Thomas Jones 2s for "mending and cleaning Earrings"; during the following year, 1769, Copeland made the same man a pair of "Necklis rings" for 2/8 and mended the

links on a pair of gold buttons for 1/4. John Harrower, a Scottish merchant who became a tutor for Colonel William Daingerfield's children at Belvidera plantation near Fredericksburg, wrote in his journal for 13 May 1775: "At noon went to town on foot, and gave in my Sett Stock Buckle to Jas. Brown [a Fredericksburg silversmith] to mend, also a Sett Hair pin of Miss Lucy Gaines's." <sup>28</sup>



*Figure 5. Detail from Mrs. Robert Riddell and her Daughter Agnes (see Fig. 8).*

Necklace clasps were another item of jewelry made by local Chesapeake silversmiths. In somewhat confusing fashion, clasps were also known as "lockets" in the eighteenth century, since the latter term actually signified a latch. Clasps often were oval in form, popularly ornamented with engraved floral arrangements; the Neoclassical period saw an increasing use of motifs such as a phoenix or a dove with an olive branch. Overshadowing these in the last quarter of the century was the eagle,<sup>29</sup> possibly the ornament cut upon the oval clasp of the coral beads worn by Agnes Riddell in a 1791 portrait (Fig.5) by Charles Peale Polk.



The term "locket" was also used to describe a more substantial form of jewelry worn around the neck. In 1772 George Norton of London wrote his brother John Hatley Norton in Yorktown, Virginia that "Lockets for the Ladies wear are much in vogue here." The Baltimore silversmith Joseph Phillippe advertised in 1791 that he had "imported . . . a Variety of Fancy Lockets."<sup>30</sup>

In 1799, the shop accounts of Connecticut clockmaker Daniel Burnap recorded a "receipt" for making a double string of gold beads. The techniques which Burnap employed to make this jewelry no doubt paralleled those used by Chesapeake artificers, whether working in gold or silver. Starting with a thin flat sheet of gold, the silversmith could

Then cut it out & punch out the centers, and then half hollow them, and then anneal them and hollow them up, rub them down, and then cramp [clamp] them, and then charge [flux] them, & then solder them, & then boil them out [to remove the flux], & then file them up, & then polish them, & then anneal them, & then color them, & boil them out in clear water, & then burnish them, and open the holes to a suitable bigness & then they are completed. . . ."<sup>31</sup>

A late eighteenth century portrait (Fig.6) attributed to the Beardsley Limner portrays a young New England girl wearing a string of gold beads. Although the author has not seen a portrait of a southern child wearing gold beads, it may be noted that Dolley Payne Todd chose to wear them when she sat for her miniature (Fig.7) which was painted about 1794 by James Peale. Later in the same year, Mrs. Todd married James Madison of Virginia. She evidently wore the identical beads when Gilbert Stuart painted her portrait in 1804. In an interesting 1895 recollection of family history, Mrs. Madison's grand-niece recorded problems which a child raised in an orthodox Quaker family encountered when she acquired a taste for finery. Mrs. Madison's grandmother had made her a gift of "old-fashioned jewelry," but " . . . not daring to wear them before her father and mother," Dolley sewed them into a bag, which was "tied around her neck, and concealed beneath her little frock. Almost the first grief of her childhood was the loss of this precious bag, discovered in school, after a long ramble through the woods, during which the string must have become unfastened, scattering the treasure where days of searching proved to no avail."<sup>32</sup>



Figure 6. *Child Posing With Cat*, attributed to the Beardsley Limner, ca. 1790, New England. Oil on canvas, 20 3/8 X 17 1/2. Courtesy the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, accession 79.100.1.

Numerous American portraits of little girls reveal the popularity of strands of coral, a material which as early as the Middle Ages was considered a talisman to ward off danger.<sup>33</sup> Coral jewelry was not confined to children, however, as we see in the portrait of Mary Riddell and her daughter Agnes (Fig. 8). Elizabeth Wormeley (1785-1816) of Virginia wore a handsome coral bracelet (Fig. 9) with a hairwork clasp embroidered with her initials.

Also revealing a fascination with the superstitious properties of coral is the child's plaything often described as a "coral and bells," usually of silver, which served as a combination rattle and teething stick (Fig. 10). One of Martha Washington's grandchildren, Martha Eliza Eleanor Peter, was born in 1796; her



*Figure 7. Dolley Payne Todd, miniature portrait ca. 1794, attributed to James Peale, Philadelphia; the miniature is now thought to be lost. Photograph courtesy the Virginia Historical Society.*

engraved silver bells and whistle, fitted with a coral handle for teething, is in the collection at Mt. Vernon. Mordecai Miller, a silversmith in Alexandria, advertised in 1796 that he had “just received a handsome assortment of SILVER WATCHES. . . . Coral, Beads, Rattles and bells for Children.”<sup>34</sup>



Figure 8. Mrs. Robert Riddell and her Daughter Agnes, by Charles Peale Polk, 1791. Oil on canvas, 36 1/2 X 34 1/2. MESDA accession 3374.

Buckles survive in substantial quantities from the early Chesapeake. The shoe buckle is thought to have been in fashion at least as early as 1659, when Samuel Pepys noted in his diary for 4 January of that year: "This day I began to put buckles on my shoes." Archaeological excavations at Jamestown have yielded numerous buckles of brass, copper, and pewter; most of them probably were made in Britain. Since buckles were not permanently attached to clothing, the finer examples no doubt were looked upon as jewelry, and indeed the quality and complexity of some designs reflect that. In addition to shoe buckles, ladies wore buckles at their waists, on their bodices, fichus, on ribbons around their necks and arms, and on the bands of beaver riding hats. Shoe buckles were the most expensive of these.<sup>35</sup>

Shoe buckles were cast of precious metals as well as copper and brass, either of which could be plated with gold or silver.



*Figure 9. Bracelet of coral, gold, and hair, attributed to England, 1785-1810, bearing the initials "EW," thought to represent Elizabeth Wormeley (1785-1816) of Virginia. Courtesy the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, acc. G1972-187.*

Gold plate was applied by a mercury amalgam process, and, after 1742, Thomas Bolsover's invention of Sheffield plate made the application of silver practical. Shoe buckles were also made of paktong, blued steel, close-plated (a silver-plating technique) iron, pinchbeck, and pewter as well as porcelain and hard-fired earthenware, particularly pearlware. The finer examples were occasionally set with precious stones of various sorts, while paste and marcasite (iron pyrites) served for less expensive buckles set with "jewels." A pair of silver buckles (Fig. 11) is signed "cs," thought to be a mark of the Baltimore silversmith Caleb Shields. Shoe buckles



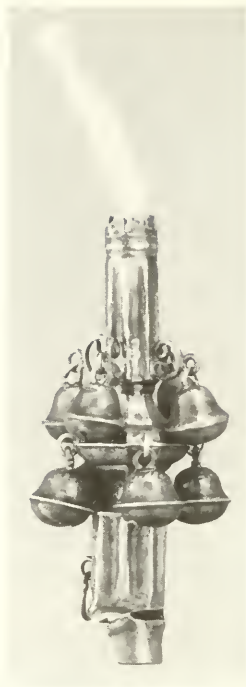


Figure 10. "Coral and bells" of silver and coral, American, 1725-1750, signed "RB." Courtesy the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, acc. G1971-2108.

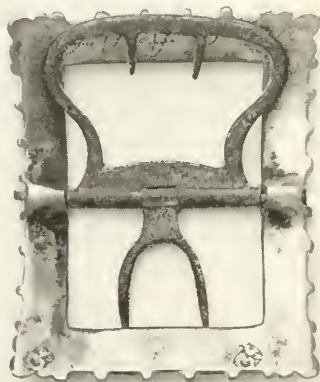


Figure 11. Pair of shoe buckles, 1765-90, silver and iron, signed "CS," attributed to Caleb Shields (d. 1792) of Baltimore, 1 15/16 X 1 11/16. Courtesy the Smallwood Museum, Rison, Md. MRF S-7833.

evolved to the largest sizes by the third quarter of the eighteenth century, decreasing in size during the Neoclassical period.<sup>36</sup>

In the Chesapeake, William Allason's account books list buckles which were generally modest in finish, but nevertheless available in a great variety at his Falmouth store. During one year, 1765, these included steel buckles, which sold for 3/9 per dozen, copper buckles, and buckles of "white mettle," "yellow mettle," brass, and "Pinchbek." Allason also carried both silverplated and "Japanned" examples as well as "Mourning Buckles."<sup>37</sup> The latter may have been finished with plain black japan varnish devoid of decoration. In Purdie & Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* for 4 June 1772, Blovet Pasteur, a Williamsburg silversmith, advertised that he had "Just Imported" and would sell "at a very low Advance, A LARGE Assortment of SILVER WORK and JEWELLERY . . . Silver Shoe, Knee and Stock Buckles . . . Hat Ditto . . . gilt Shoe, Knee, and Stock Buckles, Pinchbeck Ditto."



Figure 12. Mourning ring of gold, the cabochon of undetermined ceramic, with the inscription inside "Ann Mason obt 9 March 1773 age 39," given to John Mason at the death of his mother. Cabochon 1 X 3/4, courtesy the Board of Regents, Gunston Hall, acc. 82.94. Photograph by Charles Baptie Studios.

Mourning jewelry of the second half of the eighteenth century had its roots in *Memento Mori* jewelry, the Latin phrase signifying "Keep death in your thoughts." The custom of bequeathing mourning rings to relatives and friends was an ancient one, beginning in England at least as early as the fifteenth century. Such rings often were decorated with death's heads and coffins along with the initials and death date of the deceased. Chesapeake wills reveal the frequent bequests of mourning rings. Usually of gold, these rings were given in such numbers in New England that the Massachusetts court passed an act during the eighteenth century restraining funeral expenses. Southerners were more conservative in exercising this custom; nevertheless, Edmund Berkeley of Middlesex County, Virginia, owned nine mourning rings at the time of his own death in 1719; many of Berkeley's rings had been made for his mother-in-law, Abigail Burwell.<sup>38</sup> Such a mourning ring was given to John Mason in 1773 in memory of his mother, Ann Eilbeck Mason (1734-1773), wife of George Mason (1725-1792) of Gunston Hall on the Potomac River in Fairfax County, Virginia. In 1796, Thomas Short of St. Paul's parish in King George County, Virginia willed his daughter Ann Stith Short "my old Silver face watch and my mourning Ring for my Brother John Short also five pounds to buy [Ann] her a mourning Ring. . . ." He left a similar sum for the purchase of a mourning ring for his daughter Frances, who was "not yet baptized."<sup>39</sup> A large number of these gold rings were imported. Williamsburg silversmiths John and William Rowsay advertised in *The Virginia Gazette* for 28 April 1774 that they made and sold "all Kinds of JEWELLERY, GOLD and SILVER WORK, MOURNING RINGS, &c on the most reasonable Terms."

In his article on "Virginia Mourning Jewellery," Michael Berry observed that "The mourning ritual was an integral part of the lives of the Virginia gentry in colonial and Federal America. Mourning customs, with the elatorately codified rules of dress and behavior, were of great importance to the fashion-conscious on both sides of the Atlantic." After the middle of the eighteenth century, memorial rings were "replaced in popularity by the mourning locket, bracelet, or brooch." The lockets were often fitted with a gold frame, an oval of ivory with a mourning scene, and contained a lock of the departed person's hair on the reverse. There is evidence that the "mourning scene was worn facing inward, for the bereaved to contemplate in private."<sup>40</sup>



*Figure 13. Elizabeth Parke Custis by Robert Edge Pine, 1785, oil on canvas, 19 3/4 X 16 1/4. Courtesy Washington and Lee University.*

Mourning lockets were made both in Britain and on the Continent by the 1760s. Popular motifs employed on these objects were romantic architectural forms, including monuments, crumbling columns, and obelisks, as well as standard scenes with grieving women in classical garb, weeping willows, and funerary urns. Other symbolism included the liberated soul in the form of a bird escaping from its cage, reclining lambs, or an angel leading a shrouded figure to heaven. Locket inscriptions included



Figure 14. Mrs. John O'Donnell by Charles Willson Peale, 1787, oil on canvas, 35 1/8 X 26 1/2. Courtesy the Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Batten, acc. 62.94.1.

such homilies as "In Memory of," "Nipt in the Bud," "Not Lost/ But/ Gone Before," and "Rest in Peace." Since mourning jewelry was kept in stock by silversmiths, more personal inscriptions as well as names and dates could be added at the time of purchase. Although frame or bezel shapes were generally oval,



they were also made in both pointed oval (marquise) and octagonal forms.<sup>41</sup>

Another type of locket popular in the Chesapeake and elsewhere in America, particularly after the Revolution, contained miniature portraits usually painted on ivory, although animal skin was also used. Like mourning lockets, they were usually cased in gold, often with an engraved frame. Intended both as memorials and as possible gifts of betrothal or marriage, lockets with miniatures were frequently worn around the neck on a velvet ribbon; they were also pinned to velvet wrist bands. Elizabeth Parke Custis (1776-1832) wore a memorial miniature of her father, John Parke Custis, who died in 1781; this locket is evident in her portrait (Fig. 13), which was painted by Robert Edge Pine in 1785. Unfortunately, Custis' visage was substituted for that of George Washington in a twentieth-century restoration.<sup>42</sup>

An example of a miniature not worn as a memorial appears in the portrait (Fig. 14) of Mrs. John O'Donnell (nee Sally Chew Elliot) of Fells Point in Baltimore, Maryland. This likeness was painted in 1787 by Charles Willson Peale; Mrs. O'Donnell may have received the miniature of her husband at the time of her marriage in October 1785. What appears to be a gathering of leafage and flowers at her bodice actually may have been a naturalistic floral spray of enamelled blooms and leaves set on fine silver or steel wires. Elaborate brooches of this sort were known as *tremblants* since the slightest movement of the wearer caused the jewel to tremble or quiver.<sup>43</sup> More stylized, jewel-mounted specimens have survived, although not from the Chesapeake. A *tremblant* brooch in the form of a stomacher is shown in Fig. 15.

Another jewelry form rare in the Chesapeake was mentioned in a 1791 advertisement of the Baltimore silversmith Joseph Phillippe, who described himself as "LATE FROM PARIS." Phillippe offered "Ladies' and Gentlemen's Etwees" as well as other items including "Gold Pencil-Cases." Étuis were small ornamental cases intended to contain a variety of household and personal items such as scissors, needles, and bodkins for the hair. The "Pencil-Cases" which Phillippe sold could have been a form of étui. Though the advertisement does not describe either of these, surviving étuis from Britain and the continent are often elaborate, frequently of gold with enamelled or repoussé ornament. They were one of the devices hung upon a chatelaine, which was an elaborate chain suspended from the waist. Hung upon the chatelaine were a host of items including house keys, watches,

and watch accessories, in addition to étuis. Although they were familiar in Britain throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century,<sup>44</sup> none owned by Chesapeake ladies have been recorded, and they have not been found in silversmiths' advertisements of the region. There is no evidence that the term "chatelaine" was known before the mid-nineteenth century.

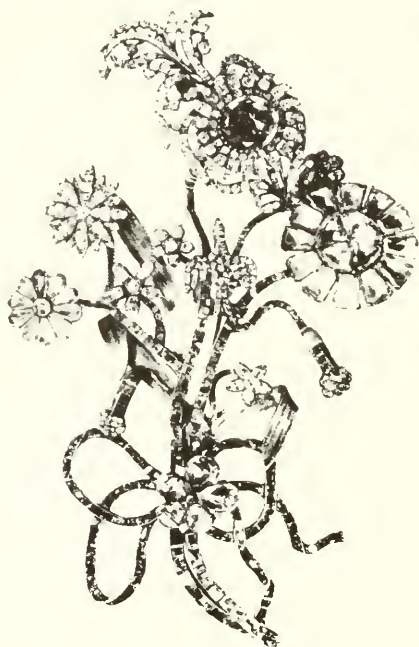


Figure 15. Tremblant stomacher set with diamonds, paste, and enamel, English, 18th century. From *The Art of the Goldsmith & the Jeweler* (New York: A La Vieille Russie, 1968), p.29. Illustration courtesy A La Vieille Russie, New York.

Snuff boxes were popular in the Chesapeake, just as they were elsewhere in America. The taking of a pinch of snuff was a ritual enjoyed by both ladies and gentlemen. Snuff boxes were made of papier-mâché, lacquered wood, shagreen, gold, and silver among other materials. English and continental examples were frequently quite elaborate, adorned with precious stones, pearls, porcelain scenes, or repoussé, such as an example (Fig. 16) with a provenance in the Custis and Washington families. In 1746 Frances Webb of Williamsburg offered "Snuff Boxes set with *Lapis Lazuls* [sic], *Onyx*, *Egyptian Pebble*, and *Philosopher Stones*" among her list of items imported from London. In 1766



Figure 16. Snuffbox, gold repoussé, unmarked, attributed to England, 1745-55, the top set with agate and the bottom (shown) engraved with the Custis arms. Believed to have been owned by Daniel Parke Custis (d. 1757), the first husband of Martha Washington, or the Custis' son Jackie. HOA 1 1/2, W'OA 1 15/16. Courtesy the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.

William Allason listed a "chas'd Silver Snuff box for 1£ 9s" in his inventory, and Joseph Phillippe of Baltimore advertised in 1791 "Gold, gilt, and Ivory Snuff-Boxes, with Pictures. . . ." <sup>45</sup>

Watches are not always considered to be jewelry since they are utilitarian rather than purely ornamental, but in the eighteenth century many of them certainly did qualify as jewelry, due to the elaborate cases, dials, and movements which the finer examples boasted. The American source of most watches was England, which had become the world center of horological excellence by the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>46</sup> Large quantities of watches were exported from Birmingham and Liverpool; London watches also were sent abroad, although the watchmaking trade in that city was not noted for catering to the export business. Like mens' watches, ladies' watches with American provenances are known. One particularly remarkable example in the collection of Mount Vernon is said to have been given to Martha Washington by her husband. The watch has a

white-enamelled face with hands mounted with diamonds. This watch is said to have an "extra gold face and two extra cases, one gold and engraved with the Dandridge and Washington coats-of-arms."<sup>47</sup>

Numerous Chesapeake silversmiths advertised the sale and repair of watches, such as John Inch of Annapolis, whose advertisement in the *Maryland Gazette* of 30 July 1761 indicated that he mended watches "in the neatest and best Manner." In the *Colonial Mirror and Alexandria Gazette* for 11 April 1797 Anthony Cayol announced himself as a "Jeweller, From Paris" noting that he had "just arrived in this town from Philadelphia, with a superb assortment of GOLD JEWELLERY, Consisting of elegant Watches enamelled, which he will warrant. . . ." Most American silversmiths did not make watches since they could not expect to compete successfully with English specialists. Nevertheless, many referred to themselves as "watchmakers."

Watches were regularly mentioned in wills, such as that of Betty Washington Lewis (1733-1797), the sister of George Washington. Part of her bequest to her daughter, Betty Carter, included "my gold watch . . . with all my wearing apparel, rings, earrings and necklace. . . ."<sup>48</sup>

Of the surviving Chesapeake jewelry set with stones, the majority were made with false gems or "strass" or "paste," as imitation diamonds or other similar stones were known. The best quality glass paste was named for George Frederic Strass (1701-73) of Alsace in France; Strass perfected the first satisfactory method of making false stones from glass. About 1758, Strass established himself on the Quai des Orfèvres in Paris.<sup>49</sup> The production of paste permitted a greater diversity of both size and shape than natural gemstones. Metal foils of various alloys and colors were used under the thin glass to provide a sparkling refraction of light. Since the foils were subject to oxidation, an airtight setting was required to prevent dulling or darkening of the foil. This was made possible by setting the glass in a closed metal cup lined with the appropriate foil.<sup>50</sup>

Paste jewelry was frequently advertised in Chesapeake newspapers during the second half of the eighteenth century. Paste necklaces, earrings, sprigs for the hair, pins, and rings, and especially shoe buckles were popular items. Paste was by no means worn only by ladies who could not afford real gems; it was popular among the nobility both in Britain and on the Continent. In a time fraught with the possibility of robbery during the course



Figure 17. Two brooches of paste, 1780-1800, the settings of an undetermined white metal, possibly pinchbeck. Attributed to England, with a provenance of the Lee family of Stratford Hall in Westmoreland County, Virginia. W'OA of crescent: 1 7/8; W'OA of butterfly: 1 1/2. Photograph printed courtesy of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, Inc., acc. G.1981.54, 1-2. MRF S-14062.

of any travel, false gems certainly were more practical for ladies who wished to venture forth with finery. This was no less true in the Chesapeake. William Waddill, a goldsmith and engraver in Williamsburg, advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* for 17 September 1767 that he had on hand "fashionable . . . paste and crystal bobs and earrings." On 29 July 1773 the Halifax, North Carolina silversmith John Geddy advertised in *Virginia Gazette* that he had "Just IMPORTED . . . FINE Paste Shoe, the Knee, and Stock Buckles; Marcasite, Paste, Wax, Pearl, and Mock Garnet Earrings and Necklaces: Paste Sprigs and Bed [sic] Pins for the Hair." Two fine paste brooches (Fig. 17) have a history of descent in the Lee family of Stratford Hall in Westmoreland County, Virginia. In 1787 a notice appeared in *The Maryland and Baltimore Advertiser* offering an eight dollar reward for the return of a "Three-Stone ring, set in Gold" along with a pair of silver knee buckles with "five Stones out." The ring was described in detail: "The middle Stone in the Ring was a Square, with a white Foil, and of a middling large Size, the others on each Side were small; the Shank of the Ring was plain and three-square." That paste jewelry was relatively inexpensive seems to have been reflected in the advertiser's comment that the pieces were "of small Value to any but the Owner," who cherished them "for their Antiquity."<sup>51</sup>

Just as gems were imitated with paste, precious metal settings were visually duplicated with inexpensive alloys. Pinchbeck was an alloy of copper and zinc; it was developed by watchmaker



Christopher Pinchbeck (d.1732) of London as a substitute for gold. The alloy was favored especially for such items as watch cases and buckles of all types. William Allason of Falmouth, Virginia, listed "shoe buckles Pinchbeck 3 at 10/6" in his 1770 invoice and inventory book.<sup>52</sup>

That eighteenth-century gentry were increasingly able to spend more leisure hours entertaining in the evening no doubt had an effect upon jewelry styles. The growing dominance of various set gemstones, including diamonds and paste, all of which glimmered dramatically in soft candlelight, has been attributed to this social phenomenon. The rising popularity of cut-glass chandeliers, wall brackets, sconces, and girandoles, coupled with the invention of Argand lamps in 1782, yielded more light that enhanced the scintillating and shimmering quality of set stones as well as faceted marcasite and steel. Consequently, gala dinner parties, ballroom dances, theatres and concert halls sparkled to such a degree that the late eighteenth century has been described as the "age of the faceted stone."<sup>53</sup>

Both the design of jewelry and the methods in which it was worn were integrated with dress fashions of the time. For an affluent Chesapeake lady living in a patriarchal society, jewelry was a visible symbol of her husband's success while simultaneously providing an elegant means to enhance femininity. Earrings and ornaments such as sprigs and pearls entwined through the hair were popular accessories; movement was an aesthetic factor in the design of *tremblant* jewelry that quivered and scintillated with every motion of the wearer. Short necklaces were worn to fill the décolletage of low-cut gowns with elbow-length sleeves. Cut with a long pointed waist and hooped skirts, such gowns were fashionable until the advent of Neoclassical fashions in the 1790s. Influenced by the "antique" styles following the French Revolution, gowns at the end of the century were characterized not by full hooped or panniered skirts of rich brocades, but by short bodices, high waistlines, and soft fabrics of delicate patterns. The décolletage remained low, but was no longer covered by a tippet or kerchief.<sup>54</sup>

Pearls are perhaps the best-documented type of jewelry in the Chesapeake. They were an important enhancement for the gowns of Chesapeake ladies, as many portraits reveal. Dress sleeves were often accented with pearls. Sarah Barclay Haskins (Fig. 18) of Talbot County, Maryland, in her portrait of c. 1790, wore five rows of pearls interspersed in a resplendent spiral form on her dress



*Figure 18. Mrs. Joseph Haskins, by Charles Willson Peale, ca. 1790, oil on canvas, 35 1/2 X 27. Courtesy the Museum and Library of Maryland History, Baltimore, acc. 48.21.1. MRF S-10109.*

sleeves. Looped pearls were used to affix furs and bows to dresses. Elizabeth Calvert (Fig. 19) of Prince George County, Maryland held her ermine fur piece in place by this means, as her 1754 portrait by John Wollaston reveals.

Mary Jemima Balfour (Fig. 20) of Elizabeth City County, Virginia supported a sash on her hair with pearls. The long hair fashionable in the eighteenth century made pearls a particularly



*Figure 19. Mrs. Benedict Calvert, by John Wollaston, 1754, oil on canvas, 30 X 25. Courtesy the Baltimore Museum of Art, Gift of Alfred R. and Henry G. Riggs in memory of General Laurason Riggs, acc. 1941.9. MRF S-9876.*

effective highlight. Martha Washington chose to entwine them in her hair for a miniature (Fig. 21) painted in 1776 by Charles Willson Peale. A 1759 description of her wedding costume reveals that "strings of pearls were woven in and out of her powdered hair. . . ." Another contemporary account of the ceremony notes that Mrs. Washington "was attired in a heavy brocade silk, interwoven with silver thread, embroidered satin petticoat, high-heeled satin shoes, with buckles of brilliants, point lace and ruffles. Her ornaments were a pearl necklace, earrings and bracelets." According to family documents and inventories, Martha Washington owned numerous pearls. Among those extant which

are thought to have been her property are seed pearl earrings, a ring with eighteen pearls in the border and a large pearl centered on a blue enamel field, a gold and pearl necklace, a pearl brooch, a pair of earrings fashioned from pearls of various sizes set on mother-of-pearl forms, each resembling a spread-winged bird, and a cross mounted with baroque pearls.<sup>55</sup>

In a portrait of c. 1769, Lucy Randolph Burwell (Fig. 22) of James City County, Virginia combined pearls and lace in an elegant coiffure. She is shown playing an English guitar; mastery



Figure 20. Mrs. James Balfour, attributed to Matthew Pratt, c. 1773, oil on canvas, 49 X 39 1/2. Courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society, acc. 968.3.

of a musical instrument was considered one of the useful accomplishments that a well-bred young Chesapeake lady should attain. Interestingly, the use of pearls to enhance the hair was so popular that Mary Riddell chose to have her 1791 portrait (Fig. 8) altered later, removing ribbons and lace in favor of a fuller coiffure with pearls, as a pre-restoration detail of the painting (Fig. 23) reveals.

Pearl necklaces were worn in single and multi-strand lengths. Necklaces often were tied with a ribbon which matched the color of the gown with which they were worn. Gainsborough's c. 1777-78 portrait of Mary Clarges (Fig. 24) prominently displays a long strand of pearls wound in choker fashion. Such English



*Figure 21. Mrs. George Washington, miniature portrait by Charles Willson Peale. Courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.*





Figure 22. Mrs. Lewis Burwell, *artist unknown, ca. 1769, oil on canvas, 36 X 29. Courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society, acc. 951.35.*

fashions were certainly known in the Chesapeake; in a somewhat earlier portrait Mary Robinson Purdie (Fig. 25) of Smithfield, Virginia, wears an interesting necklace with elongated beads, perhaps of turned and polished ivory. Whatever the material that comprises these beads, they are separated on the string by seed pearls, and natural pearls appear to make up the looped pendant. The necklace is tied with a ribbon.

As Mrs. Purdie's portrait indicates, pearls were by no means the only adornment for the hair; aigrettes and sprigs were also



Figure 23. Detail of Mrs. Robert Riddell (see Fig. 8) before conservation, showing a later alteration of the portrait.

popular. The aigrette was intended to represent a tuft of feathers, specifically the crest feathers of one of the egret family, although the jewelry versions of these feathers were not necessarily intended to be realistic. The aigrette was often accompanied by *tremblant* flowers, butterflies, and birds. The floral spray (Fig. 25a) to the left of Mrs. Purdie's aigrette appears to have been such a *tremblant*. Aigrettes were set with diamonds, semiprecious stones, or paste. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the nature of the stones in Mrs. Purdie's aigrette, or just how it was attached to the hair-pin at its base. In a 1766 invoice to "Ed. Dixon," William Allason listed such items as "egrettes," nine of "gold" and two "White and green." His invoice and inventory book for October, 1767 listed additional "Egrettes," seven of them "gold" and one of "silver."<sup>56</sup>

The small pieces of jewelry known as sprigs, and which also adorn Mrs. Purdie's hair, often performed dual tasks. They were used both as hair ornaments and as small flower-spray pins worn on the sleeves; they also ornamented the overskirts of mid-eighteenth century court dresses. Chesapeake silversmiths adver-

tised sprigs, though most notices were seldom as specific as that of James Geddy of Williamsburg, who advertised in October, 1768 that he had "Just imported in the last ship from London, and to be sold at a low advance, by the subscriber . . . [in] Williamsburg, A NEAT assortment of JEWELLERY, consisting of the following articles, viz. Stone and paste shoe, knee and stock buckles, stone and plain gold brooches, hair sprigs, pins, crescents, and earrings. . . ." On 4 June 1772 Blovet Pasteur, another Williamsburg silversmith, offered a "Large Assortment of SILVER WORK and JEWELLERY..Necklaces and Earrings of various Sorts;



*Figure 24. Mary Clarges, by Sir Thomas Gainsborough, 1777-78, oil on canvas. Courtesy of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.*



Figure 25. Mrs. George Purdie, attributed to John Durand, 1760-65, oil on canvas, 31 X 26. MRF S-9517.

Locketts, Sprigs and Paste Pins. . . .” Mentioned previously was an order to London by Catherine Rathell of Williamsburg, who among other items was to receive “3 Garnet Sprigs from 9 to 12/aps [apiece].”<sup>57</sup>

Brooches and pendants continued to be fashionable, following the long popularity of asymmetrical seventeenth century designs often composed of floral sprays, as well as girandole forms consisting of a large central stone about which were grouped a number of smaller stones. From this hung three large pendant pearls or drops. The *sè vignè* was a brooch in the form of an open-



Figure 25a. Detail.

work bow with a pendant in the center.<sup>58</sup> An example of a *sèvigné* bow brooch worn by several generations of Chesapeake ladies was a loop of pearls set with a central stone and having an elongated baroque pearl pendant, as worn by Sara Fitzhugh Bland in her 1767 portrait (Fig. 26). This was almost certainly the same jewel worn by her mother, Sarah Battaile Fitzhugh, in a portrait of 1751 (Fig. 27). Sarah Bland also wore pearl buttons on her dress, pearls in her hair, and a triple strand of pearls at her neck, while her mother wore only a double strand of pearls at her neck.

Brooches in the form of crescents, feathers, stars, and butterflies were advertised by silversmiths. Hannah Ludwell Lee of Stratford Hall in Westmoreland County, Virginia, is thought to have worn a crescent brooch (Fig. 17) set with paste stones. The brooch, however, appears to have been made later than the 1749 death date of Mrs. Lee, and seems more likely to have been owned by a later member of the Lee family. Accompanying the crescent, and with the same provenance, is a butterfly brooch (Fig. 17) which, like the crescent, is set with colorless paste that imitates





*Figure 26. Sarah Fitzhugh, by John Hesselius, 1767, oil on canvas, 50 X 40. Courtesy the Museum and Library of Maryland History, acc. 46.1.1.*

diamonds. The foil is still bright on both of these pieces, attesting to the quality of the settings.

Elizabeth Boush Travis of Norfolk and Williamsburg wore an elaborate necklace in her portrait (Fig. 28) of 1769 which has been described as “pale aquamarines in [a] gold filigree” setting.<sup>59</sup> In reality, the principal jewels of this necklace may be pearls, although the oval cabochons indeed may be aquamarines. The limner, John Durand, may have indulged in a certain degree of artistic license in representing these jewels, although jewelry of

this quality usually was painted quite realistically. The necklace is tied with a ribbon that matches the sitter's dress. More readily identifiable in regard to the materials employed is a finely-fashioned garnet necklace (Fig. 29) with gold settings that was worn by Martha Washington. Despite the fine quality and dramatic design of the necklace, it reveals a certain lack of regularity and precision of finish that is characteristic of much early jewelry. The linking lozenges differ in size and shape, and the stones set in the clusters have irregular faceting. Although some eighteenth century jewelers were equipped with hand-powered polishing wheels, the techniques and tools used for lapping facets



*Figure 27. Mrs. Henry Fitzhugh, by John Hesselius, 1751, oil on canvas, 30 X 25. Courtesy the Virginia Historical Society, acc. 954.3.*

often lack the sophistication inherent to work of the nineteenth century and later.

Jeweled stomachers (Fig. 15) were fashionable in England and Europe during the eighteenth century, but they have not been found in the advertisements of Chesapeake silversmiths. The stomacher was actually in use much earlier; in its most common form, it was made entirely of fabric. The jeweled examples are quite rare. They were made in the form of a large V-shaped brooch, and were worn just below the bodice of the dress, accentuating the pinched waist. The 1700 estate inventory of the Henrico County, Virginia silversmith Turtulian Sehut contained



*Figure 28. Elizabeth Boush, by John Durand, 1769, oil on canvas, 30 X 25. MRF S-4463.*



*Figure 29. Garnet necklace owned by Martha Washington, probably British, 1770-90. Courtesy of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.*

“1 Golden Stomacher” along with such items as a “great parcell of Gold Smiths tooles,” and “1 Silver Girt with Silver buckles . . . 1 Amber Necklace . . . 1 perle Necklace with two Strings . . . 2 Rings with Green Stones . . . 1 hand and hart Ring.”<sup>60</sup>



*Figure 30. Tiara, necklace, and earrings of topaz with gold settings, Paris, France, 1794-96, owned by Mrs. James Monroe. The tiara is  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ ; the necklace is 17" in length, and the cross  $2\frac{1}{4} \times 1\frac{3}{4}$ ; the earrings are each  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in length. Courtesy of the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library, Fredericksburg, Virginia. MRF S-14064.*

The parure was familiar to affluent Chesapeake ladies of the late eighteenth century; it was generally composed of three or



more articles of jewelry, often consisting of a necklace, bracelet, and earrings.<sup>61</sup> Aigrettes, combs, tiaras, and brooches were also made *en suite* as elements of a parure. The term "Sett" has been found in at least one Chesapeake inventory. Two demi-parures were owned by Elizabeth Kortright Monroe (1768-1830). One was set with aquamarines, and the other (Fig. 30) with topazes. Both parures have gold settings, and are reported to have been made by Napoleon Bonaparte's court jeweler during James Monroe's 1794-96 tenure as Minister to France. In 1770 "A Garnet comb for the Hair to be bought of Benja. Gurdon & Son to Suit a Sett of Necklace and Earrings sent by them in Sept. 1768" was ordered for Martha Washington,<sup>62</sup> revealing that ladies did not always purchase every item of a parure at the same time.

Less expensive jewelry was also available. Very popular by the middle of the eighteenth century was marcasite, or iron pyrites, faceted to resemble diamonds. It was used primarily as ornament for buckles, but the mineral was also used in the same types of settings found on fashionable diamond jewelry. In addition to marcasite, "gems" of faceted steel enjoyed widespread popularity by the 1760s, though such work was known in Britain much earlier. This type of decoration especially was favored for buckles; the "gems" were often made as individual studs which could be removed from a buckle frame for repolishing. Others were permanently riveted to the frames,<sup>63</sup> but were very likely casehardened to better retain the precise, highly burnished surfaces of the facets. [Editor's note: some sources report that these steel studs were cast, but that is improbable since cast iron does not accept a brilliant polish, and technology for casting steel did not exist in the eighteenth century.] Such jewelry was not inexpensive, for a large shoe buckle may have been fitted with well over one hundred faceted studs in varying sizes. In 1778, one English lady, Mrs. Lybbe Powys, visited a "fine steel manufacture at Woodstock" in England, finding the work to be "all amazing dear." Interestingly, some silver buckles were cast with faceted ornament much in the fashion of steel buckles (see Fig. 11). William Allason's inventory book of 1765 listed two dozen "Steele Shoe Buckles" at £0.3.9 per dozen, very likely indicating that they were quite plain, and probably fire-blued.<sup>64</sup>

During the last half of the century, jewelry set with miniature medallions and plaques picturing classical subjects was widely worn. Ornaments of this kind had a great appeal, but the hand-cut examples made of stone were costly, and they were duplicated

with press-moulded ceramic wares with a porcelainlike nature. Josiah Wedgwood (1730-95) was producing successful cameos in the Neoclassical style by 1775.<sup>65</sup> A “Stone Cameo carving with the head of Bacchante” was listed in the jewelry section of the



*Figure 31. Gold clasp ring, attributed to Maryland, 1790-1800, unmarked. The engraved cypher “GCH” is thought to represent George C. Hoffman of Baltimore, who in 1799 married Margaret Elizabeth Tilghman of Talbot County. Private collection.*



*Figure 31a. Detail.*

1899 sale catalog of Dolley Madison's estate, although it is not known when Mrs. Madison acquired the cameo. At the time of their 1794 wedding, Madison presented his bride with an exceptionally elaborate "Mosaic and Gold Necklace, with Eardrops," the eleven mosaics "representing the Temple of Minerva, the Tomb of Caecilia Metallis, the Bridge Colla Pontius Luganus, the Coliseum of Flavius Vespeaincus, Pontius Salasius, the Temple of Vesta, the Temple of Venus, Tomb of Caius Caustus, Temple of Jupiter Tonnant and the Temple of Jupiter Stator."<sup>66</sup>

Finger rings were a favored jewelry form throughout the eighteenth century, although illustrations of Chesapeake examples are not readily found. One gold clasp ring (Figs. 31, 31a), while not an example of ladies' jewelry, is a rare survival of Chesapeake-made gold. Although the ring is not signed, it bears what are thought to be the initials of George C. Hoffman, who in 1799 married Elizabeth Tilghman of Talbot County, Maryland. John Geddy of Halifax, North Carolina announced in *Purdie & Dixon's Virginia Gazette* for 29 July 1773 that he would engrave "MOURNING RINGS, ARMS, CRESTS, SEALS. . . ." More highly ornamental rings, especially those set with precious stones such as aquamarines, sapphires, and diamonds were generally imported to the Chesapeake.



Figure 32. Two vinaigrettes of silver owned by Mrs. James Monroe. Both examples are by Birmingham silversmiths; that on the left (1 3/16 X 1) bears the mark of W. Lea & Co. and the date letter for 1817/18, while the 1795-1800 vinaigrette on the right (1 3/8 X 1) is signed "IS", probably for John Shaw (there is no date letter).

By the closing decade of the century, a preponderance of Chesapeake silversmiths' advertisements listed an array of diverse jewelry forms, including unusual pieces such as the "vinegrettes"

offered by William Richardson of Richmond in 1792.<sup>67</sup> The vinaigrette contained a sponge dampened with vinegar or smelling salts, either of which were intended to help a lady ward off a fainting spell. Two English examples in silver (Fig. 32) belonged to Mrs. James Monroe. Like silver hollow ware, which had begun to proliferate in the Chesapeake at the close of the century, jewelry had become increasingly affordable as the wealth of the region approached a far greater degree of parity than had been known even a few decades earlier.

A quintessential Chesapeake silversmith's notice in the closing years of the eighteenth century is that of Joseph Phillippe, the Baltimore jeweler, silversmith, and engraver. His advertisement of 1791 reflects a comprehensive array of luxuries that by this time were deemed necessities by affluent Chesapeake men who had progressed well beyond the gathering of property, and could see to the acquisition of amenities for their ladies. At Phillippe's shop they could find imported finery including:

Ladies' and Gentlemen's Silver and set Shoe, Knee, and Stock Buckles; a Variety of Fancy Locketts, Rings, and Bracelets; Ladies' and Gentlemen's Etwees; Pearl Necklaces; Gold, Silver, and gilt Watch-Seals; Gold Watch-Chains; Gold Pencil-Cases; Silk and Leather Strings, with Gold, Steel, and gilt Mounting; a Variety of Trinkets for Watches; Silver and Steel Slides for Hair; Gold, gilt, and Fancy Chain Earrings; Gold, gilt, and Ivory Snuff-Boxes, with Pictures, &c. &c.

Like many Chesapeake silversmiths, Phillippe made increasing reference to the "Jewellery Business." Also like most silversmiths in the region, he imported most of such finery, although along with his contemporaries he stood ready to accept orders for the products of his own bench, including such items as "Mourning Rings, Locketts, and Hair-Devices, executed on shortest Notice."<sup>68</sup> While every piece of jewelry with a Chesapeake provenance provides us with a glimpse of the elusive personal world of the women of the region, jewelry actually produced by early Chesapeake artisans should be considered more important than even the most glorious imported finery.

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## FOOTNOTES

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30. Mason, *Norton*, p. 232; *Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, 4 November 1791.
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